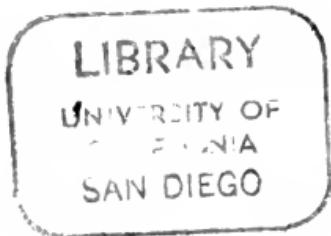


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# POEMS FROM SHELLEY AND KEATS

SELECTED AND EDITED

BY

SIDNEY CARLETON NEWSOM

TEACHER OF ENGLISH IN THE MANUAL TRAINING  
HIGH SCHOOL, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

New York

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## PREFATORY NOTE

THE joint committee on English requirements for admission to college recommends, among other supplementary readings, selections from the poetry of Shelley and Keats. The present volume includes, it is hoped, all the more popular poems of these two authors. Opportunity for choice is thereby given, since the length of time ordinarily devoted to literature in the high school will make it impossible to read all of the selections.

Poems of Shelley and Keats, judiciously chosen, are admirably suited to the needs of the high school pupil. Both wrote when young, and their poetry embodies ideas with which young people must always be in lively sympathy.

In the introduction it has been the aim to furnish only such information and suggestions as are easily within the comprehension of the average pupil. Formal criticism should be dealt with sparingly in the

high school, yet it does not seem advisable to ignore it entirely. When possible the notes have been written in the form of questions. There are instances, however, in which a direct statement of facts is necessary, though in the case of Shelley and Keats these instances are comparatively rare.

Inconsistencies in spelling have been emended, otherwise the texts followed are those of Dowden and Forman. The poems are not arranged in chronological order.

The chief sources from which information has been drawn in preparing this volume are given under "Bibliography," though special mention should be made of the Essays of Hutton, Bagehot, Arnold, and Dowden; and of the "Life of Keats" by Colvin.

S. C. N.

INDIANAPOLIS,  
June, 1900.

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# INTRODUCTION

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## LIFE OF SHELLEY

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY was born in 1792. His family was an old one, reaching back through a long line of ancestors to Henry Shelley of Worminghurst, Sussex, who died in 1623. Some authorities find members of the family present at the Norman Conquest; others, less easily pleased, mention Henry Shelley, an officer in the court of Henry VII, as a notable representative. The record is perfectly clear so far back as 1623; beyond this there is some confusion.

Sir Bysshe Shelley, the poet's grandfather, was the first member of his own branch of the family to achieve distinction. He was born in Newark, New Jersey, North America, married twice before he was forty years of age, amassed a great fortune, and died in 1806, a crabbed, penurious old man. Timothy, the only son, succeeded to his father's title and estates, but did not inherit the dash and charm nor other striking qualities which made Sir Bysshe in his youth

and early manhood an interesting character. Indeed, there was nothing to distinguish Timothy Shelley from the rank and file of the somewhat stolid and complacent squirearchy of the latter half of the eighteenth century. Mrs. Shelley, whom he married in 1791, was a lady of unusual beauty, not especially interested in books, though a good letter-writer. She appears to have been sensible and kindly, and, though possessed of a rather violent temper, not inconsiderate of her children. Shelley was the oldest in a family of six, two boys and four girls.

At the age of six, under a Welsh parson who taught him chiefly Latin, Shelley's education was begun. Four years later he entered Sion House Academy, near Brentford, where the head master, Dr. Greenlaw, superintended the instruction of fifty or sixty boys in Latin, Greek, French, and the elements of astronomy. After two years here he went to Eton and thence, in 1810, at the age of eighteen, to Oxford.

The chief account of Shelley's early life at home before his entrance at Oxford is given by his younger sister Hellen. The brother John, born in 1806, was too young to be a companion, but the four sisters were associates and eager sympathizers in all his sports and boyish pranks. These were many and curious. A garret, long closed and unused, was "undoubtedly the habitation of an alchemist, old and gray, with venera-

ble beard, where by lamplight the sage pored over some magic tome"; the space above a low passage must be investigated in search of a mysterious chamber, the lurking-place of some awful secret. The "Great Tortoise" of a neighboring pond and the "Great Old Snake" that hid in the gardens were subjects of endless tales of enchantment and terror, at whose recital the little girls would shudder and Bysshe would assume the attitude of protector. With the aid of his sisters he sometimes sought to give concrete form to his imaginary world. "They became a crew of supernatural monsters: the little girls in strange garbs were fiends; Bysshe the great devil bearing along the passage to the back door a fire stove flaming with his infernal liquids." Occasionally his boyish spirit found exercise in practical jokes: "At one time a countryman passed the windows of Field Place, with a truss of hay forked over his shoulders; the intruder was recalled, and there stood Bysshe, disguised." At another time "a lad called on Colonel Sergison at the Horsham lawyer's house and asked in Sussex dialect to be engaged as gamekeeper's boy; his suit was successful, and 'then of course there was an explosion of laughter' and the jester stood revealed."

His residence at school furnishes a decided contrast to this happy life at home. His progress under his first teacher was slow, but at Sion Academy he stood

Hard eggs and radishes and rolls at Eton,  
And couched on stolen hay in those green harbours  
Farmers called gaps and we schoolboys called arbours  
Would feast till eight."

In his studies he did not restrict himself to the prescribed course. Franklin and Godwin among English authors, Lucretius and Pliny among the classics, were read with unusual zest. Interest in science which had been aroused at the Academy was now intensified. "Night," says a schoolfellow, "was his jubilee. He launched his fire balloons on errands to the sky," he performed experiments in physics and chemistry, the latter a forbidden subject at Eton, and prepared surprises for his visitors, not excepting his tutor. During vacation at Field Place he became the master magician for his sisters and younger friends. He found endless amusement in teaching them the mysteries of the galvanic battery and the uses of the burning-glass. His work in science did not, as may well be imagined, extend very far. He was impatient of mathematics, and science interested him chiefly as a pleasing recreation and not as a means of strenuous discipline.

Shelley's residence at Oxford continued less than a year. His one intimate friend there was Thomas Hogg, who has given an interesting though not always accurate account of Shelley's life at college. They

met almost on the first day in the dining hall of the University, and the chance acquaintance thus made soon grew into a warm friendship. "His figure," says Hogg in describing his appearance at this time, "was slight and fragile, and yet his bones and joints were large and strong. In gesture he was abrupt and sometimes violent, occasionally even awkward, yet more frequently gentle and graceful. His complexion was delicate and almost feminine, of the purest red and white; yet tanned and freckled by exposure to the sun, having passed the autumn, as he said, in shooting. . . . His features were not symmetrical (the mouth, perhaps, excepted), yet was the effect of the whole extremely powerful. They breathed an animation, a fire, an enthusiasm, a vivid and preternatural intelligence that I have never met with in any other countenance. Nor was the moral expression less beautiful than the intellectual; for there was a softness, a delicacy, a gentleness, and especially (though this will surprise many) that air of profound religious veneration that characterizes the best works and chiefly the frescoes (and into these they infused their whole souls) of the greatest masters of Florence and Rome."

In many respects the life at Oxford was very pleasing to Shelley. Its freedom suited him, and he did pretty much as he pleased. He was uninterrupted by mischievous boys, and had much time for recreation

and opportunity for reading not suggested by his teachers. The lectures were not satisfactory, and he took small interest in them; but to Hogg he seemed "a whole University in himself" in the enthusiasm with which he read, and, in turn, stimulated his companion. He still gave attention to experimental science. His room was topsy-turvy with various apparatus and materials, but Hogg's indifference and occasional cynicism dampened Shelley's ardor. He was Shelley's senior by some years, and, there is little doubt, exercised an abiding, and for a time controlling, influence on him. With quick insight he recognized his wonderful genius. Though he was too much a man of the world to worship blindly, if at all, his admiration for Shelley was genuine. Himself an occasional writer of poetry and ardent lover of literature, he found inspiration and delight in the society of one who surpassed him from every point of view. The two walked, read, disputed, all but lived together. "The examination of a chapter of Locke's 'Essay Concerning Human Understanding,'" declares Hogg, "would induce him at any moment to quit every other pursuit." Hume's Essays, the Scotch metaphysicians, and "popular French works that treat of man, for the most part in a mixed method, metaphysically, morally, and politically," were eagerly discussed, and the facts and laws therein discovered as eagerly and

earnestly, by Shelley at least, applied to existing institutions.

Utopias have ever been beloved of idealists; and theories such as the two found in their reading appealed with peculiar force to Shelley. Oxford was there to furnish a contrast. Blinely subservient to the past, the University offered little to attract a young and ardent spirit, bent on examining every institution in the light of its own worth. And Shelley, in his youthful enthusiasm, was learning to question. The authors he had been reading influenced him much; Hogg, perhaps, more; and Oxford, it can hardly be doubted, offered a silent challenge.

Soon after the Christmas holidays there appeared in the *Oxford Herald* an advertisement of a pamphlet, *The Necessity of Atheism*. The pamphlet was published very shortly after, and copies were distributed throughout the University. It bore no signature, but Shelley was supposed to be the author. He was arraigned and questioned by the authorities, but declined giving the desired information. Thereupon he was summarily dismissed the University upon the charge of "contumacy in refusing to answer certain questions." Hogg, of his own accord, sent a note to the Master and Fellows, protesting against their course. He was summoned and the same questions asked Shelley were addressed to him. Upon his refusal to answer, he too was expelled.

Shelley's offence has been described as "the rash act of a boy whose brain was at work, who loved to impress his own ideas on others, and who enjoyed the excitement of an intellectual adventure." The fact of his extreme youthfulness certainly goes far toward excusing him, but this, and whatever other palliative circumstances may suggest themselves, did not soften the punishment which Shelley suffered then and, to some extent, during his future life. The expulsion marks a turning-point in his career. The attitude of his father, already irritated at his son's eccentricities, together with the treatment received at Oxford, aroused a spirit of defiance which so far had been latent. He refused outright to obey his father's commands, and proceeded to London in company with Hogg. Two of his sisters, who were at school near London, supplied him with money, sending it by their classmate, a certain Harriet Westbrook.

In the meantime, through the intervention of friends, Shelley was given an allowance of £200 a year with permission to choose his place of residence. For a time he remained at Field Place, but found the conditions there intolerable. While on a visit to Wales he again met Harriet, with whom he had been corresponding. The acquaintance, begun a few months before, now grew into an intimacy which ended in a sudden elopement to Scotland and mar-

riage there August 11, 1811. Shelley was nineteen years old; his wife, sixteen. Timothy Shelley promptly stopped the allowance upon hearing of his son's marriage, and Mr. Westbrook refused to help them. Before the end of the year, however, when Shelley had suffered the inconveniences and anxieties of one in debt with no prospect of relief, the allowance was restored, Mr. Westbrook contributing a like sum.

The remainder of Shelley's life was spent in wandering to and fro. He was drawn to Keswick by his admiration for Southey, whose principles at an earlier date were now, in a large measure, Shelley's own. Personal acquaintance with Southey does not seem to have increased Shelley's regard. The elder poet had grown conservative, and criticised, too severely perhaps, some of Shelley's plans for reorganizing society. Some months later Shelley addressed a letter to Godwin, whom he had never seen. "Your name," he wrote, "I had enrolled in the list of the honorable dead." Upon discovering Godwin's place of abode he at once communicated with him. A reply came promptly, warning Shelley against his attitude toward his father and his too eager enthusiasm for reforming the world.

But Shelley was not to be dissuaded. Accompanied by his wife and sister-in-law, he went to Ireland, where he might give aid in the struggle for political indepen-

dence and religious freedom. Six weeks were spent in Dublin. He wrote one or two pamphlets and published an *Address to the Irish People*. When he spoke before a great audience met to consider a petition to the Prince Regent in behalf of Catholic Emancipation, it misinterpreted him, applauding and hissing by turns. "I am sick of this city," he wrote; "the spirit of bigotry is high, . . . and prejudices are so violent, in contradiction to my principles, that more hate me as a freethinker than love me as a votary of freedom."

Not discouraged, he continued in his efforts to emancipate humanity. Upon his return to England, at the small village of Lynmouth on the coast of Devon, in company with a friend, he employed himself in floating boxes and bottles containing copies of his pamphlets. Occasionally a balloon was loosened bearing in its hold *A Declaration of Rights*. His servant Healy was arrested and imprisoned for posting up certain seditious notices, and Shelley himself was closely watched by government detectives.

His efforts to improve the condition of the people, however, did not end with the promulgation of abstract theories. At Tremadoc he exercised himself in various ways to relieve the poor. He visited them in their homes, supplying food and medicine, gave money in cases of distress, and generously subscribed £100

toward building an embankment whose completion would infinitely benefit the laboring classes of the neighborhood.

His activities in this direction were not successful. He removed to London, where he became more or less intimately associated with Hogg, Peacock, Godwin, and Leigh Hunt. The respect and admiration with which he regarded Godwin were strengthened by a more intimate knowledge of that philosopher's ways of thinking. Nor can there be any question as to the wholesomeness of Godwin's influence (more powerful than any other at any period in moulding Shelley's thought) upon him at this time. He felt the inadequacy of Shelley's abstract doctrines because he himself was the medium through which they came. He advised him to study history, and understand what had been noble in human character and action, which, he observed, "is perhaps superior to all the theories and speculations that can possibly be formed."

At his mother's request Shelley made a clandestine visit to Field Place. He had previously addressed a conciliatory letter to his father, hoping that the "unfavorable traits" of his character might be condoned, and that the time was not far distant when they might "consider each other as father and son." But Timothy Shelley wished to impose conditions which could not be borne. Shelley declined to renounce his

convictions and accepted in silence his father's refusal of "all further communication."

It is not the purpose of this brief account of Shelley to discuss minutely certain vexed questions of his life. Both his attitude toward his father and his course of action in matters touching yet more directly the purity and manliness of his character have enlisted the services of those who condemn and those who defend. It is sufficient to state that annoyances and misfortunes at this period made his life wretched. His domestic relations were unhappy. Extreme generosity to Godwin and others placed him at the mercy of creditors who harassed him ceaselessly. The death of Sir Bysshe Shelley improved the situation in some measure, but, as if to offset advantages, entailed a settlement between Shelley and his father. Sir Timothy sought to make Shelley's younger brother, John, the heir to the estate, but certain provisions in the will prevented. Negotiations dragged on interminably, but finally ended in a partial settlement, whereby Bysshe received a yearly allowance during his life of £1000.

Shortly after the death of his wife Shelley married Mary, the daughter of Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft. The suit with his father still continued, and made his residence in London necessary. Early in 1817, relieved of this, he removed to Marlow, on the Thames, a short distance out from the city.

Though impaired in health and under the stress of a fancied obligation to pay Godwin's debts, he looked back in after years upon the time at Marlow as one of the happiest periods of his life. Among acquaintances who visited him may be mentioned Hunt, Peacock, Hazlitt, and Keats. Mrs. Shelley, a student and lover of literature hardly less eager than Shelley, was busily engaged with *Frankenstein*, which she finished during the year. Shelley himself read and studied much. English authors were not ignored, but the Greek dramatists attracted him more strongly. He busied himself with a translation of the Homeric Hymns, but his most significant work was *The Revolt of Islam*, his longest poem. Though finding his chief pleasure in social intercourse with his chosen friends and in study, he did not forget the poor. He went among them just as he did at Tremadoc, and "on Saturday evenings came his pensioners for their allowance, widows and children being preferred to other claimants."

As winter set in Shelley's health declined. Yielding to the advice of physicians, he decided to seek change of climate in Italy. Accompanied by his family, he sailed early in 1818, sojourned at Milan for two weeks, and settled temporarily at Leghorn about the 1st of May. Byron, whom Shelley had met in Switzerland two years before, he now visited at Venice. *Julian and*

*Maddalo* is a veiled account of his impressions at this time of Byron, and a description, somewhat colored, of himself. He recognized the great qualities of Byron's genius, but detected at once the contemptible elements in his character. In the course of the next three years he learned to know Byron well, and his first impressions were strengthened by more intimate associations.

Shelley's life in Italy was nomadic. In England he had hoped for a permanent home at Marlow, but for many reasons his wish came to naught. In Italy his health improved, yet the severe climate during the winter in the northern portions racked him with pain. His place of residence depended largely upon change of seasons. A spirit of innate restlessness, too, developed largely no doubt by his wanderings in England, made it impossible for him to remain long in one place. He visited all the more famous Italian cities, writing and studying continually. In 1819, Shelley's *annus mirabilis*, he finished, at Florence, *Prometheus Unbound*, begun at Este, a villa near Venice. The *Cenci*, *Mask of Anarchy*, *Peter Bell the Third*, *Ode to Naples*, *Ode to the West Wind*, with one or two shorter but exquisite lyrics, complete the list of his poetical creations for the year, and bear evidence to the unusual vigor of his literary activity.

From January, 1820, till the close of his life, Shelley

resided the greater part of the time at Pisa. Byron joined him there, and the two decided to start a new periodical, *The Liberal*. Hunt, who had been ill at home in England, was asked to be the editor. The circle of friends was increased during the year by the arrival of Trelawny, who had become acquainted with Shelley sometime earlier through their common friend, Edward Williams. Trelawny has given an extremely interesting account of Shelley's last days in his *Recollections*. The three friends were passionately fond of the sea, and it was agreed to spend the summer months on the coast of the Bay of Spezzia.

In the meantime Shelley was writing enthusiastic letters to Hunt, urging him to make all haste. Sickness and other misfortunes made it necessary to furnish Hunt with money for the voyage and to provide for the comfort of himself and family during their first days in Italy. On June 19, 1822, the long wished for arrival was announced. In company with Williams and a boy who should manage the boat, Shelley sailed for Leghorn, where he met Byron and Hunt. After much vacillation on the part of Byron, definite arrangements were made for the publication of *The Liberal*. Among other things Hunt should have the copyright of *The Vision of Judgment* for the first number, which "is more than enough," wrote Shelley, "to set up the Journal."

On July 8, with his two companions, Shelley started on his return voyage across the bay. The weather was threatening, and Hunt begged him to wait. Ten miles out the boat was observed by friends in Leghorn, then a mist and spray thrown up by the thunder-squall hid it from view. The storm passed in twenty minutes, and Trelawny eagerly scanned the horizon, but Shelley's boat had disappeared. A period of intense anxiety followed. One week later two bodies were found upon the beach and identified as those of Williams and Shelley. In one of Shelley's pockets was found a volume of Sophocles, in the other, doubled back at the "Eve of St. Agnes," a volume of Keats's poetry which had been given him at Leghorn by Hunt. The quarantine laws of the Italian coast made it necessary, in the opinion of friends, to burn the remains near the place where they were discovered. This was done under the supervision of Trelawny in the presence of Captain Shenley, an English officer, Hunt, and Byron.

## SHELLEY AS A POET

From whatever point of view the reader approaches the entire body of Shelley's poetry for purposes of study, a simple classification is necessary. The series of poems, beginning with *Queen Mab*, an immature boyish composition, and ending with *Hellas*, written shortly before his death, embody the views of Shelley the reformer. The shorter poems disclose, in the main, the purely aesthetic qualities of Shelley the poet. A brief discussion of both philosophical and lyrical poems will be appropriate.

It has been recorded that on August 4, 1792, the day of Shelley's birth, along the roads near Field Place, "the aristocratic emigrants in coaches, in wagons, in fish-carts," were pouring from revolutionary France. The coincidence is very suggestive. Shelley was a firm believer in the principles of the French Revolution, and throughout his life remained a steadfast supporter of the cause, as he conceived it, of liberty. In matters of abstract philosophy and religion he changed his opinions, and in mature years disowned with shame *Queen Mab*, the completest exposition in verse of his early revolutionary ideas. But in politics he treasured to the last his vision of an ideal state,

where love would be the all-sufficient motive, and reason the guide to action.

His estimate of the innate qualities of the human mind and heart was high. "The prominent feature of Shelley's theory of the destiny of the human species," writes Mrs. Shelley, "was that evil is not inherent in the system of the creation, but an accident that might be expelled." He insisted that error and ignorance are the ultimate sources of man's sorrow and degradation, and that the race is capable of infinite improvement. The chief obstacle, as he saw it, is a system of government which permits unscrupulous rulers to oppress and stultify their subjects. The representative system of the "Republic of the United States" is "sufficiently remote from ideal excellence," yet "the most perfect of practical governments," and one in which the freedom, happiness, and strength of its people are due to their political institutions. Two conditions, however, demand the most careful consideration: first, "the will of the people should be represented as it is;" secondly, "that will should be as wise and just as possible."<sup>1</sup> The fundamental conception of such ideal excellence was not original with Shelley. Many writers contributed to his views, Godwin more than others; but the distinct form and imaginative

<sup>1</sup> Shelley's "Philosophical View of Reform," *Transcripts and Studies*, Dowden, pp. 41-74.

coloring in which these bare abstractions are presented are Shelley's own.

*Prometheus Unbound* is perhaps the most adequate statement of his hope for the future, as it is certainly his greatest achievement in poetry. It is written in the form of a lyrical drama, a species of composition in which Shelley imitates the method of the Greek tragedians. There is no attempt at delineation of human character, and the abstract ideas which the poem embodies are more or less obscure because of the cumbrous machinery of allegory. A Greek myth, used by Æschylus in *Prometheus Bound*, serves with alterations for the general plan of the poem. The friend of mankind is personified in the figure of Prometheus, who is chained to a rock and exposed to various evils by Jupiter, the unjust and tyrannous ruler of the universe. When Prometheus, defying his enemy, has suffered centuries of torture, Demogorgon, the primal power of the world, drives Jupiter from his throne, and Necessity, in the person of Hercules, delivers Prometheus from his sufferings. Asia, the wife of Prometheus, represents the spirit of love in the human race. She is now restored to her husband, and their union marks the beginning of the Golden Age.

Shelley's political philosophy did not escape criticism during his life. It has been the subject of much

discussion since his time. It is at once evident that his system is impracticable, and that its chief defect springs from his ignorance of humanity. The insistence that evil resides wholly in things external and not in the will of man is warranted neither by history nor by the most casual study of modern states. Such study and reflection must inevitably force the conclusion that "humanity is no chained Titan of indomitable virtue," but "a weak, trembling thing which yet, through error and weakness, traversed or overcome, may at last grow strong."<sup>1</sup> A republic, which comes nearest Shelley's ideal, is precisely so good from every point of view as its people. It is neither above nor below the standard insisted upon by the majority of voters. There may be abuses and temporary defeat of the popular will, but in the end it is this that regulates, or rather is, the law. "The progress that concerns us," as has been well said, "is that which consists in working out the beast, and in gradually growing to the fulness of the stature of the perfect man."<sup>1</sup> Reforms that are far-reaching and permanent must begin in work which refines the emotional and intellectual nature of the average man, and not in abstractions which at best only embody his present views of life.

But is it wise to estimate the value of *Prometheus*

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Shelley*, Dowden, Vol. II., p. 264.

*Unbound* in the light of its fallacies? It certainly urges a doctrine that is practically false, but this is only a partial statement of the truth. Out of Shelley's imperfect and distorted views come other things which the world has always treasured. The political principles in which he believed gained the sincere admiration and support of Wordsworth and Coleridge in their earlier days. They, like Shelley, proclaimed a Golden Age, but, unlike him, lived long enough to forget their dream and accept the world as it is. No poet has conceived more highly of the possibilities of human life nor remained truer to his ideal. Himself of aristocratic family, he was unwilling to accept worldly advantages springing from his position, which would in his opinion entail an unjust law upon future generations.<sup>1</sup>

At the very heart of his eager enthusiasm for humanity was an abiding love of justice, a love so strong that the dry abstractions and theories of his long philosophical poems become radiant in its light. Springing from this and hardly less pronounced were his intense sympathy for the oppressed, and his hatred of the oppressor. His belief in the brotherhood of man and his recognition of the responsibility of the state for the welfare of the individual are firmly established

<sup>1</sup>In the settlement with his father he was offered a great fortune upon condition of entailing the estate. Shelley refused.

in the popular mind, just as other tendencies of his thought, not so clearly expressed, are distinctly modern. "I never could discern in him," writes Hogg, "more than two fixed principles. The first was a strong, irrepressible love of liberty; . . . the second, an equally ardent love of toleration of all opinions; as a deduction and corollary from which latter principle, he felt an intense abhorrence of persecution of every kind, public or private." His experience at Eton in the midst of schoolboy trials doubtless had much to do with his views, but one can hardly escape the impression that his love of liberty was innate and that the radiant splendor of his verse is due to the depth and earnestness of his convictions.

Certain critics, discrediting Shelley's political philosophy as vague and inadequate, are enthusiastic in praise of the lyrical passages scattered throughout his longer poems. Yet, even in these passages, as well as in nearly all of his purely lyrical verse, one may detect the author's "enthusiasm for humanity." "I consider poetry very subordinate to moral and political science," he writes to Peacock, "and if circumstances permitted I would aspire to the latter." It is doubtless true, however, that his most enduring work is his short poems, and for reasons already sufficiently indicated.

Lyrical poetry is, in the main, the expression of personal mood or feeling, and the essential qualities of mind of a writer of lyrical poetry are extreme sensitiveness, great emotional and imaginative power. Shelley possessed each of these qualities in an unusual degree. Impressions from the outside world, too delicate and evanescent for ordinary perceptions, influenced him profoundly. "I am formed," he declares, "if for anything not in common with the herd of mankind, to apprehend minute and remote distinctions of feeling, whether relative to external nature or the living beings which surround us." The accuracy of this bit of self-analysis is verified over and over again in his poetry. A brief study of the diction and phrasing in the *Sensitive Plant*, for instance, shows how fine is his sensibility. There are "*quivering* vapors of *dim noontide*," "*music delicate, soft and*" yet "*intense*," "*The tremulous bells* of the Naiad like lily" and other descriptions remarkable for their delicate shades and shadows. The ardor with which he responded to these "minute and remote distinctions" may seem at times to the casual reader out of all proportion to the circumstances.

It has, in fact, been pointed out<sup>1</sup> that to this impulsiveness is largely due a characteristic of Shelley's poetry which we have come to regard as a fault. The

<sup>1</sup> *Aspects of Poetry*, Shairp, pp. 194-218.

natural world, as it really is, has little place in his poetry. He catches a glimpse of the landscape, an outline of the mountain peak, or a momentary gleam of the sea, and straightway busies himself with his impressions. — “Nature he uses mainly to call from it some of its most delicate tints, some faint hues of the dawn or the sunset clouds, to weave in and color the web of his abstract dream.” Many poets portray nature with great faithfulness. The strength and charm of Wordsworth’s poetry lie in this as much as in anything else. To many readers, however, Shelley’s ideal creations are as dear as Wordsworth’s realistic descriptions. The two things are different, and each, in its way, is admirable, and the more delightful for its opposite. We need to remember that the countless beautiful forms and images in Shelley’s poetry, the radiant color investing them, the spontaneity and freedom of his lyric utterance, and the matchless rhythm of his verse, all owe in a large measure their exquisite charm to this impulsiveness.

The true explanation of his imperfect grasp of the objects of nature is not far to seek. The cause does not lie in a weak sensibility, as might at first be inferred, but in the hot impatience and irritability of his temperament, as already suggested, joined to an imaginative power rarely equalled in literature. “Under the influence of a sentiment which would at most

warm the surface of other poets' minds into a genial glow, Shelley's bubbles up from its very depths into a sort of pale passion, and seethes with imprisoned thought." What has been explained by critics is corroborated by Shelley in conversation with Hogg. "When my brain gets heated with thought," he observed, "it soon boils, and throws off images and words faster than I can skim them off." Such a mind is poorly qualified for precise delineation of the actual facts of nature. By its very constitution it recoils from long-continued observation, and is incapable of holding up its subject for narrow inspection. The emotional and imaginative qualities of mind must wait, to be sure, upon the receptive powers. The ideal world is ultimately dependent upon the actual world, but in Shelley's case the dependence is often so remote that the reader is confused amid the rapid succession of forms and images having so little in common with what is visible and tangible about us. For complete understanding one must continually seek and find the poet's point of view.

The scope of his imagination is no less wonderful than its fineness. "What can the ordinary person say about a cloud?" some one has asked. In a blunt way the question forcibly suggests Shelley's power. The magnificent sweep of his conceptions, when he has chosen some immense element or force of nature for

his theme, is in striking contrast to the delicate precision and finish of some of his minor lyrics. *Prometheus Unbound* illustrates this most adequately, but one or two shorter poems afford excellent examples. He is often forced in such instances to use his material under the form of personification or allegory, and one would expect poetry of this kind to be cold and mechanical. But Shelley's lyrical force sustains him. What would be attenuated and all but lifeless in another poet, is made to glow under the touch of his passionate inspiration. He is equally at home in making his reader realize the awful grandeur of the boundless regions of space, and in portraying with nicest touch the tremulous tints of a summer dawn; and it is rarely the case that any one of his poems does not show in some degree these two extremes of his imaginative range.

Briefly, then, the qualities of mind and heart which are found in Shelley's poetry are first a dominant impulse or passion for reforming mankind. This wish or hope for a future Golden Age is the theme, almost unsupported, of the greatest of his poems. The ideas of reform given in *Prometheus Unbound*, are those of the dreamer rather than the practical statesman. Their value lies in the fact that Shelley is an optimist and encourages us to believe in and trust the innate goodness of the human heart. Their falsity lies in

Shelley's ignorance of mankind and in a meagre, imperfect knowledge of history. As a writer of lyrical poetry his interest in the welfare of the race is more or less evident. Yet the purely æsthetic qualities of his mind constitute the chief value of his shorter poems. These qualities are extreme sensitiveness, great emotional and imaginative power. Keenly susceptible to all things beautiful, his mind was no less active in bodying forth its figures and images in marvellous profusion and beauty.

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## LIFE OF KEATS

"The publication of three small volumes of verse," writes Houghton in his life of Keats, "some earnest friendships, one profound passion, and a premature death . . . [are] the only incidents of his career." This statement accurately summarizes this admirable biography, but is far too brief for those who would know that life in its fulness.

John Keats was born in 1795 and died in 1821. His father, Thomas Keats, born and bred in the country, came to London when a boy and secured the place of head hostler in a livery stable owned by a Mr. John Jennings. As time progressed, he married the daughter of his employer; and later, upon retirement of his father-in-law from active affairs, assumed entire control of the business management. Keats's mother, whose temperament he inherited, has been described as "a lively, clever, impulsive woman, passionately fond of amusement." Besides the poet, the eldest child, there were four children, three brothers and a sister. The youngest son died in infancy, and the father was killed by a fall from his horse in 1804. The family, thus reduced to the mother and four children, continued their residence at the old home for

little more than a year, Mrs. Keats marrying, in the meantime, a Mr. Rawlings who had succeeded her husband in control of the livery stable. The second marriage was unhappy, and Mrs. Rawlings with her children went to the home of her mother, Mrs. Jennings, who lived at Edmonton.

Very little is known of the home life of the family. Both father and mother were devoted to their children, and before the father died, John, with the brother George, next to him in age, were sent to the private school of the Rev. Mr. Clarke at Enfield. Upon the removal of the family to Edmonton, the residence of John at Enfield, with that of the younger brother, Tom, was still continued. The account given in later years by his schoolmates there is the chief source of information concerning Keats, and indirectly concerning his family.

He passed five years (1805–1810) of his boyhood in the school at Enfield. At first he showed little aptitude for his books, but during the last terms, in his fourteenth and fifteenth years, he became unusually studious and easily took the prizes offered by the school for excellence in literature. In addition to the regular course he began a translation of the *Aeneid* into prose, and read books of history and Ancient mythology. “In my mind’s eye,” writes Cowden Clarke, son of the principal of the school

and one of Keats's warmest friends, "I see him at supper, sitting back on the form from the table, holding the folio volume of *Burnet's History of My Own Time* between himself and the table, eating his meal from beyond it."

His schoolboy friends seem to have been chosen on the score of their courage and fighting propensities. "He himself would fight any one—morning, noon, and night," writes a classmate; and another observes that he had "a highly pugnacious spirit, which, when roused, was one of the most picturesque exhibitions—off the stage—I ever saw." With the same unanimity it is recorded that he was the favorite of all. The generosity and highmindedness of his character were no less evident than his pugnacity, and especially fine was the zealous care with which he protected his younger brother.

Keats's boyhood was full of happiness, but in the midst of his pleasures came misfortune. His mother, who had been in poor health for some time, declined rapidly and suddenly died. The family were bound together by ties of natural affection unusually strong, and Keats was inconsolable in his sorrow, giving "way to such impassioned and prolonged grief (hiding himself in a nook under the master's desk), as awakened the liveliest pity and sympathy in all who saw him." Six months later, July, 1810, his grandmother

executed a deed leaving the larger part of her property to the orphan children and placing them under the care of two guardians.

One of these, Mr. Abbey, with the consent of his associate, assumed control of the children upon the death of Mrs. Jennings a few months later. It was decided that Keats should fit himself for the practical business of life. He was accordingly withdrawn from school and apprenticed to a surgeon for a term of five years. Little is known of his work as an apprentice, but the friendships formed during the years at school were not forgotten. Once a week he walked to Enfield to read and talk with Cowden Clarke. He finished his translation of the *Aeneid* during this time, and became deeply interested in the poetry of Spenser. The *Faerie Queene*, in particular, fascinated him. "Through the new world thus opened to him [he] went ranging with delight—'ramping' is Cowden Clarke's word; he showed, moreover, his own instincts for the poetical art by fastening with critical enthusiasm on epithets of special felicity or power. 'For instance,' says his friend, 'he hoisted himself up and looking burly and dominant, as he said, "What an image that is—sea-shouldering whales."'" It is doubtless true that the *Faerie Queene* first stimulated Keats into a consciousness of his own poetical genius. The *Imitation of Spenser* is, probably, his earliest poetry;

but inspired by his master and encouraged by the sympathy of his friend Clarke, he continued to write occasional sonnets and other verse.

In the meantime his work as apprentice was growing extremely distasteful. There is no direct evidence of a quarrel with Hammond or of neglect of duty, yet it is probable that the drudgery of a surgeon apprenticeship and his growing love of poetry were incompatible. He did not as yet, however, give up his profession, but decided to continue his studies in London. He spent a year at St. Thomas's Hospital, successfully passed his examinations, and was appointed, March, 1816, a dresser at Guy's Hospital. He had become skilful and dexterous in surgical operations, and declared to Brown, his personal friend, that he could use the scalpel "with the utmost nicety." But it is quite evident that his tasks were perfunctory. "Sketches of pansies and other flowers" occasionally "decorated the margin of his manuscript note-book." When questioned by Clarke about his studies he observed, "The other day, for instance, during the lecture, there came a sunbeam into the room, and with it a whole troop of creatures floating in the ray, and I was off with them to Oberon and fairy-land." He did his work regularly at the hospitals, but his inclinations were otherwise and he gradually yielded to them.

Clarke, who had settled in London, introduced him to Leigh Hunt. Through the *Examiner*, Hunt's magazine, he had come to know the author while yet a schoolboy at Enfield, and had learned to admire him. They were soon warm friends and in time became very intimate. Hunt, shallow, graceful, and with a disposition of sunshine, was immeasurably beneath Keats in native endowment, yet he exercised for a time a controlling and moulding influence upon him. They passed much time together and had many tastes in common. Other acquaintances were Shelley, to whom Keats did not take very kindly, Hayden the artist, and Severn, who a few years later was to accompany him to Italy.

In 1817, at the suggestion of friends, he published his first volume of poems. Though containing *O Solitude*, *Sleep and Poetry*, and other unmistakable evidences of high poetic faculty, the book made very little impression upon the public. Hunt wrote a friendly though discriminating criticism in the *Examiner*, and through his influence the volume received notice in several papers. A few chosen friends were enthusiastic and encouraged Keats to continue writing. Yielding to their advice, he made an excursion to the Isle of Wight in order to have the benefit of seclusion and rest, which he felt he needed before beginning new work.

His circle of friends was growing larger. He met Lamb, Hazlitt, Coleridge, and Wordsworth. Hazlitt was delivering a series of lectures on literature at Surrey Institute, and he and Keats became good friends, though Hazlitt does not seem to have recognized fully Keats's greatness. Mention is made of "an immortal dinner" given by Hayden, where Wordsworth quoted Milton and Virgil "with fine intonation" and Lamb perpetrated absurd jokes. Later Wordsworth invited Keats to his home. Keats recited the *Hymn to Pan* (*Endymion*) and Wordsworth patronizingly observed that it was "a pretty piece of Paganism."

*Endymion*, begun a year before, was published early in 1818. Immediately thereafter, in company with a friend, Keats started on a walking tour through northern England. They visited the lake region, but missed seeing Wordsworth, who happened to be away from home. Keats was in excellent spirits, and at first thoroughly enjoyed the rugged scenery and the novelty of his daily experiences with the country people. But before his tour was half finished he began to suffer from exposure. Several times he was drenched to the skin, and climbing mountains was too much for him. In a letter he complains of "a slight sore throat," and adds that he has over-exerted himself. He became feverish, and finally decided, upon the advice of a physician whom he consulted, to return

to London by boat, leaving his friend to complete the tour alone. From this time on Keats's health steadily declined. His inherent tendency to consumption was undoubtedly strengthened by his indiscretion and thoughtlessness:

Immediately upon his return to London there appeared a brutal criticism of *Endymion* in the periodical, *Blackwood*. Later the *Quarterly* contained an article hardly less savage. Keats was too fully conscious of his own integrity and of the meanness of motive behind these criticisms to be seriously affected by them. In a letter to a friend he observes, "When I feel I am right, no external praise can give me such a glow as my own solitary re-perception and ratification of what is fine." It is not probable, as once was thought, that the criticisms of these periodicals hastened in any large measure his death.

The remaining incidents of Keats's life need not be recited in detail. His best poetry — the six odes — was yet to be written, but misfortunes of one sort or another made his last days wretched. His invalid brother, Tom, to whom he was devotedly attached, after a lingering illness died. George, the companion brother of his boyhood days, had emigrated to the United States, and Keats himself, in addition to his declining health, was in financial straits that pressed him greatly. He attempted to find work on the press in London, but failed.

In the midst of these disappointments he became despondent and careless of his health. Fresh exposure resulted in renewed hemorrhages, and in company with his friend Severn he took passage for Italy in September, 1820. Shelley, immediately upon hearing of Keats's sickness, had written from Pisa urging him to make his home there. But Severn and Keats had both decided upon Rome and it was too late to alter plans. The voyage and the climate of Italy proved beneficial and for a time Keats rallied. Severn entertained strong hopes of his recovery, but the improvement was deceptive. A second relapse was followed by his death, on February 23, 1821. "Three days later his body was carried, attended by several of the English in Rome who had heard his story, to its grave in that retired and verdant cemetery, which for his sake and Shelley's has become a place of pilgrimage to the English race forever."

## KEATS AS A POET

We usually think of Keats as one of the chief poets of the "Romantic School." In the history of the development of English literature he is given a place with Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and Byron. It is well, however, when possible, to indicate more precisely a poet's relations to his contemporaries.

Wordsworth complained that with one or two exceptions not a single new image of external nature had been given from the publication of *Paradise Lost* to the *Seasons*—a period of sixty years. Of course Wordsworth's statement is too sweeping; yet the exaggeration may be pardoned when we consider the extent to which the English poets were hampered by literary precedent at the beginning of this century. Ideals of any sort which have come gradually and have fastened themselves firmly in the public mind cannot be attacked with impunity. The criticism directed against Wordsworth was hardly less than downright insult. The principles of poetic composition which he was at pains to state very minutely in the prefaces to his poems were received with scorn, and he himself was the subject of ridicule not unmixed with contempt. Hazlitt declares that "if Byron was

the spoiled child of fortune, Wordsworth was the spoiled child of disappointment." After his thirtieth year Wordsworth wrote very little genuine poetry, and Coleridge's best work appeared in the *Lyrical Ballads*. Wordsworth stubbornly upheld his theories to the end of his long life, and Coleridge lost himself in the mazes of philosophy and metaphysics.

There is no doubt, however, that they sowed the seeds of a revolution whose results have been altogether beneficial. Their sympathies were with the great Elizabethans, and the tendency of much in their theories of poetry and in their practice points to the Age of Shakespeare as the only literary period worthy of serious attention. Keats has been called "alike by gifts and training a true child of the Elizabethans." A close study of his poetry makes the truth of the statement evident. Responding to the influences of his time, he looked beyond his own age and the one preceding for his ideals, and found them in Milton, Spenser, and Shakespeare.

Coming directly to a consideration of the qualities of his style, we are at once impressed with his extraordinary susceptibility to the beauty of the natural world. A friend observes that "He was in his glory in the fields. The humming of a bee, the sight of a flower, the glitter of the sun, seemed to make his nature tremble; then his eyes flashed, his cheek

glowed, and his mouth quivered." He is at home with his sensations, and his sympathy with nature is not of the intellectual or reflective kind. He does not seek to harmonize his love of nature with any system of philosophy, but rather to know and enjoy without restraint the beauty of her forms. This freedom from conventions is a partial explanation of the utter simplicity and exquisite freshness of his verse. Face to face with natural phenomena he was untrammelled by prejudices. No theory chilled his innocent delight nor retarded a complete devotion to the charm of sensuous beauty. It was his instinct to respond quickly and eagerly to all appeals to the eye and ear, and to realize for his reader the perfect beauty of the woods and fields.

Though primarily a poet of the senses, he is not deficient in imaginative power. His arraignment of eighteenth century writers, who

" . . . were closely wed  
To musty laws lined out with wretched rule  
And compass vile,

indicates his feeling for the school of Pope, and his statement that "poetry should surprise by a fine excess" suggests at once the imaginative qualities of his own verse. Not so daring as Shelley nor so faithful as Wordsworth, he excels both in the gorgeous color

of his imagery. If he sins, as some would have it, it is on the side of over-decoration, yet the ease and absence of all effort with which he works go far toward disarming criticism. In bringing home to one a vivid picture of natural scenery or of any beautiful object, he is unique among poets. The force of his descriptions lies in this, more perhaps than in anything else. His experience becomes our experience, and we seem to be in the actual presence of the objects portrayed.

No analysis, of course, will disclose the ultimate secret of this, any more than it will the subtle charm of any genuine work of art. Yet the remarkable vividness of his imagery is surely heightened by the action and movement which are rarely absent from his descriptions, and by his perfect feeling for word and phrase. "I have loved the principle of beauty in all things," he writes, and this extends to the vehicle as well as the substance of his thought. It is this rare sensitiveness to the power of words that calls forth Matthew Arnold's well-known eulogy, "Shakespearian work it is; not imitative, indeed, of Shakespeare, but Shakespearian, because its expression has that rounded perfection and felicity of loveliness of which Shakespeare is the great master."

Keats died before he was twenty-six years old, and nearly all the poems by which he is most favorably known were produced in rapid succession during a

period of twenty months. This is a sufficient explanation of much that is crude in his work. The wonder is that under the circumstances, he produced so much that is without a flaw. His errors are those of youth and immaturity. "Would the faculties that were so swift to reveal the hidden delights of nature, to divine the true spirit of antiquity, to conjure with the spell of the Middle Age—would they with time have gained equal power to unlock the mysteries of the heart, and still, in obedience to the law of beauty, to illuminate and harmonize the great struggles and problems of human life?" There is good reason for believing so, yet, taking his poetry as it is, one must admit that he does not explore the heights and depths of human experience. In a perfectly innocent youthful way he revels in the beauties of the natural world, pointing the way for others, less gifted, to a love of nature not less complete and genuine than his own.

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## POEMS FROM SHELLEY

### TO A SKYLARK

HAIL to thee, blithe spirit!

Bird thou never wert,  
That from heaven, or near it,  
Pourest thy full heart  
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher

From the earth thou springest  
Like a cloud of fire;<sup>o</sup>  
The blue deep thou wingest,  
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever  
singest.

10

In the golden lightning

Of the sunken sun,  
O'er which clouds are brightning,  
Thou dost float and run;  
Like an unbodied<sup>o</sup> joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even  
    Melts around thy flight;  
Like a star of heaven,  
    In the broad daylight  
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill de-  
light.

20

Keen as are the arrows  
    Of that silver sphere,  
Whose intense lamp narrows  
    In the white dawn clear,  
Until we hardly see,— we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air  
    With thy voice is loud,  
As, when night is bare,  
    From one lonely cloud  
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is  
    overflowed.

30

What thou art we know not;  
    What is most like thee?  
From rainbow clouds there flow not  
    Drops so bright to see,  
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden  
In the light of thought,  
Singing hymns unbidden,  
Till the world is wrought  
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not; 40

Like a high-born maiden  
In a palace-tower,  
Soothing her love-laden  
Soul in secret hour  
With music sweet as love, which overflows her  
bower:

Like a glow-worm golden  
In a dell of dew,  
Scattering un beholden  
Its aërial hue  
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from  
the view: 50

Like a rose embowered  
In its own green leaves,  
By warm winds deflowered,  
Till the scent it gives  
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-  
wingèd thieves:

Sound of vernal showers  
On the twinkling grass,  
Rain-awakened flowers,  
All that ever was  
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass:

Teach us, sprite or bird,  
What sweet thoughts are thine:  
I have never heard  
Praise of love or wine  
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,  
Or triumphal chant,  
Matched with thine would be all  
But an empty vaunt,  
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want. 70

What object are the fountains  
Of thy happy strain ?  
What fields, or waves, or mountains ?  
What shapes of sky or plain ?  
What love of thine own kind ? what ignorance of  
pain ?

With thy clear keen joyance  
Languor cannot be:  
Shadow of annoyance  
Never came near thee:  
Thou lovest: but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.      80

Waking or asleep,  
Thou of death must deem  
Things more true and deep  
Than we mortals dream,  
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal  
stream?

We look before and after,  
And pine for what is not:  
Our sincerest laughter  
With some pain is fraught;  
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest  
thought.      90

Yet if we could scorn  
Hate, and pride, and fear;  
If we were things born  
Not to shed a tear,  
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures  
Of delightful sound,  
Better than all treasures  
That in books are found,  
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground! 100

Teach me half the gladness  
That thy brain must know,  
Such harmonious madness  
From my lips would flow,  
The world should listen then, as I am listening  
now.

### THE CLOUD

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,  
From the seas and the streams;  
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid  
In their noonday dreams.  
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken  
The sweet buds every one,  
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,  
As she dances about the sun.  
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,  
And whiten the green plains under,

And then again I dissolve it in rain,  
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,  
And their great pines groan aghast ;  
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,  
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.  
Sublime on the towers of my skyey bowers,  
Lightning my pilot sits,  
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,  
It struggles and howls at fits ;  
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,  
This pilot is guiding me,  
Lured by the love of the genii that move  
In the depths of the purple sea ;  
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,  
Over the lakes and the plains,  
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,  
The Spirit he loves remains ;  
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,  
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

20

30

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,  
And his burning plumes outspread,  
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,

When the morning star shines dead,  
As on the jag of a mountain crag,  
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,  
An eagle lit one moment may sit  
In the light of its golden wings.  
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea  
beneath,  
Its ardors of rest and of love,  
And the crimson pall of eve may fall  
From the depths of heaven above,  
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,  
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,  
Whom mortals call the moon,  
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,  
By the midnight breezes strewn;  
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,  
Which only the angels hear,  
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,  
The stars peep behind her and peer;  
°And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,  
Like a swarm of golden bees,  
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,  
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,

40

50

Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,  
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,  
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl ; 60  
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,  
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.  
From cape to cape with a bridge-like shape,  
Over a torrent sea,  
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,  
The mountains its columns be.  
The triumphal arch through which I march  
With hurricane, fire, and snow,  
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,  
Is the million-colored bow ; 70  
The sphere-fire above its soft colors wove,  
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,  
And the nursling of the sky ;  
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores ;  
I change, but I cannot die.  
For after the rain when with never a stain,  
The pavilion of heaven is bare,  
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex  
gleams,

80

Build up the blue dome of air,  
 I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,  
 And out of the caverns of rain,  
 Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the  
 tomb,  
 I arise and unbuild it again.

## ODE TO THE WEST WIND

## I

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,  
 Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead  
 Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,  
 Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,  
 Pestilence-stricken multitudes : O thou,  
 Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed  
 The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,  
 Each like a corpse within its grave, until  
 Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill      10  
 (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)  
 With living hues and odors plain and hill :

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere ;  
Destroyer and preserver ; hear, O hear !

## II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,  
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,  
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,  
Angels of rain and lightning : there are spread  
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,  
Like the bright hair unlifted from the head      20

Of some fierce °Mænad, even from the dim verge  
Of the horizon to the zenith's height  
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge  
Of the dying year, to which this closing night  
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,  
Vaulted with all thy congregated might  
  
Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere  
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst ; O hear !

## III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams  
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay ;  
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,      30

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,  
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers  
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers  
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them ! Thou  
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below  
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear  
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly <sup>°</sup>grow gray with fear,  
And tremble and despoil themselves ; O hear !

40

## IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear ;  
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee ;  
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free  
Than thou, O uncontrollable ! If even  
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,  
As then, when to outstrip thy skyey speed  
Scarce seemed a vision ; I would ne'er have striven

50

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.  
 Oh lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud !  
 I fall upon the thorns of life ! I bleed !

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed  
 One too like thee : tameless, and swift, and proud.

## v

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:  
 What if my leaves are falling like its own !  
 The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone, 60  
 Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,  
 My spirit ! Be thou me, impetuous one !

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe  
 Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth !  
 And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth  
 Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind !  
 Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy ! O wind,  
 If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ? 70

## WITH A GUITAR, TO JANE

ARIEL to <sup>o</sup>Miranda. — Take  
The slave of Music, for the sake  
Of him who is the slave of thee,  
And teach it all the harmony  
In which thou canst, and only thou,  
Make the delighted spirit glow,  
Till joy denies itself again,  
And, too intense, is turned to pain ;  
For by permission and command  
Of thine own Prince Ferdinand,  
Poor Ariel sends this silent token  
Of more than ever can be spoken ;  
Your guardian spirit, Ariel, who,  
From life to life, must still pursue  
Your happiness ; — for thus alone  
Can Ariel ever find his own.

From Prospero's enchanted cell,  
As the mighty verses tell,  
To the throne of Naples, he  
Lit you o'er the trackless sea,  
Flitting on, your prow before,  
Like a living meteor.

When you die, the silent Moon,

15

20

In her interlunar swoon,  
Is not sadder in her cell  
Than deserted Ariel.

When you live again on earth,  
Like an unseen star of birth,  
Ariel guides you o'er the sea  
Of life from your nativity.

Many changes have been run,  
Since Ferdinand and you begun  
Your course of love, and Ariel still

Has tracked your steps, and served your will;  
Now, in humbler, happier lot,  
This is all remembered not;

And now, alas! the poor sprite is  
Imprisoned, for some fault of his,  
In a body like a grave;—

From you he only dares to crave,  
For his service and his sorrow,  
A smile to-day, a song to-morrow.

30

45

The artist who this idol wrought,  
To echo all harmonious thought,  
Felled a tree, while on the steep  
The woods were in their winter sleep,  
Rocked in that repose divine

On the wind-swept Apennine ;  
And dreaming, some of Autumn past,  
And some of Spring approaching fast,  
And some of April buds and showers,  
And some of songs in July bowers,  
And all of love ; and so this tree,—  
O that such our death may be ! —  
Died in sleep and felt no pain,  
To live in happier form again :  
From which, beneath Heaven's fairest star,  
The artist wrought this loved Guitar,  
And taught it justly to reply,  
To all who question skilfully,  
In language gentle as thine own ;  
Whispering in enamoured tone  
Sweet oracles of woods and dells,  
And summer winds in sylvan cells ;  
For it had learnt all harmonies  
Of the plains and of the skies,  
Of the forests and the mountains,  
And the many-voicèd fountains ;  
The clearest echoes of the hills,  
The softest notes of falling rills,  
The melodies of birds and bees,  
The murmuring of summer seas,

50

60

70

And pattering rain, and breathing dew,  
And airs of evening; and it knew  
That seldom-heard mysterious sound,  
Which, driven on its diurnal round,  
As it floats through boundless day,  
Our world enkindles on its way —  
All this it knows, but will not tell  
To those who cannot question well  
The spirit that inhabits it;  
It talks according to the wit  
Of its companions; and no more  
Is heard than has been felt before,  
By those who tempt it to betray  
These secrets of an elder day:  
But sweetly as its answers will  
Flatter hands of perfect skill,  
It keeps its highest, holiest tone  
For our belovèd Jane alone.

80

90

## SONNET

LIFT not the painted veil which those who live  
Call Life: though unreal shapes be pictured there,  
And it but mimic all we would believe  
With colors idly spread,— behind, lurk Fear

And Hope, twin destinies ; who ever weave  
Their shadows, o'er the chasm, sightless and drear.  
I knew one who had lifted it — he sought,  
For his lost heart was tender, things to love,  
But found them not, alas ! nor was there aught  
The world contains, the which he could approve. 10  
Through the unheeding many he did move,  
A splendor among shadows, a bright blot  
Upon this gloomy scene, a Spirit that strove  
For truth, and like the Preacher found it not.

## SONNET: ENGLAND IN 1819

AN old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king, —  
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow  
Through public scorn, — mud from a muddy spring, —  
Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know,  
But leech-like to their fainting country cling,  
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow, —  
A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field, —  
An army, which liberticide and prey  
Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield  
Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay ; 10  
Religion Christless, Godless — a book sealed ;  
A Senate, — Time's worst statute unrepealed, —

Are graves, from which a glorious Phantom may  
Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

## SONG TO THE MEN OF ENGLAND

## I

MEN of England, wherefore plough  
For the lords who lay ye low ?  
Wherefore weave with toil and care  
The rich robes your tyrants wear ?

## II

Wherefore feed, and clothe, and save,  
From the cradle to the grave,  
Those ungrateful drones who would  
Drain your sweat — nay, drink your blood ?

## III

Wherefore, Bees of England, forge  
Many a weapon, chain, and scourge,  
That these stingless drones may spoil  
The forced produce of your toil ?

## IV

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,  
 Shelter, food, love's gentle balm ?  
 Or what is it ye buy so dear  
 With your pain and with your fear ?

## V

The seed ye sow, another reaps ;  
 The wealth ye find, another keeps ;  
 The robes you weave, another wears ;  
 The arms ye forge, another bears.

20

## VI

Sow seed,—but let no tyrant reap ;  
 Find wealth,—let no impostor heap ;  
 Weave robes,—let not the idle wear ;  
 Forge arms,—in your defence to bear.

## VII

Shrink to your cellars, holes, and cells ;  
 In halls ye deck another dwells.  
 Why shake the chains ye wrought ? Ye see  
 The steel ye tempered glance on ye.

## VIII

With plough and spade, and hoe and loom,  
Trace your grave, and build your tomb,      30  
And weave your winding-sheet, till fair  
England be your sepulchre.

## THE SENSITIVE PLANT

## PART FIRST

A SENSITIVE Plant in a garden grew,  
And the young winds fed it with silver dew,  
And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light,  
And closed them beneath the kisses of night.

And the Spring arose on the garden fair,  
Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere;  
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast  
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with bliss  
In the garden, the field, or the wilderness,      10  
Like a doe in the noon-tide with love's sweet want,  
As the companionless Sensitive Plant.

The snowdrop, and then the violet,  
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,  
And their breath was mixed with fresh odor, sent  
From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

Then the pied wind-flowers and the tulip tall,  
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,  
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,  
Till they die of their own dear loveliness ;

20

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,  
Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale,  
That the light of its tremulous bells is seen  
Through their pavilions of tender green ;

And the hyacinth purple and white and blue,  
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew  
Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,  
It was felt like an odor within the sense ;

And the rose like a nymph to the bath addressed,  
Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast,  
Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air  
The soul of her beauty and love lay bare :

30

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up,  
As a Mænad, its moonlight-colored cup,

Till the fiery star, which is its eye,  
Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky;

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tuberose,  
The sweetest flower for scent that blows;  
And all rare blossoms from every clime,  
Grew in that garden in perfect prime.

40

And on the stream whose inconstant bosom  
Was pranked under boughs of embowering blossom,  
With golden and green light, slanting through  
Their heaven of many a tangled hue.

Broad water-lilies lay tremulously,  
And starry river-buds glimmered by,  
And around them the soft stream did glide and dance  
With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.

And the sinuous paths of lawn and of moss,  
Which led through the garden along and across,  
Some open at once to the sun and the breeze,  
Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees,

5c

Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells  
As fair as the fabulous <sup>o</sup>asphodels,  
And flowrets which drooping as day drooped too  
Fell into pavilions, white, purple, and blue,  
To <sup>o</sup>roof the glow-worm from the evening dew.

And from this undefiled Paradise  
The flowers (as an infant's awakening eyes  
Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet  
Can first lull, and at last must awaken it),  
60

When Heaven's blithe winds had unfolded them,  
As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem,  
Shone smiling to Heaven, and every one  
Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun;

For each one was interpenetrated  
With the light and the odor its neighbor shed,  
Like young lovers whom youth and love make dear  
Wrapped and filled by their mutual atmosphere.  
69

But the Sensitive Plant, which could give small fruit  
Of the love which it felt from the leaf to the root,  
Received more than all, it loved more than ever,  
Where none wanted but it, could belong to the giver;

For the Sensitive Plant has no bright flower;  
Radiance and odor are not its dower;  
It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full,  
It desires what it has not, the beautiful!

The light winds which from unsustaining wings  
Shed the music of many murmurings;

The beams which dart from many a star  
Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar;

80

The plumèd insects swift and free,  
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,  
Laden with light and odor, which pass  
Over the gleam of the living grass;

The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie  
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,  
Then wander like spirits among the spheres,  
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears;

The quivering vapors of dim noontide,  
Which like a sea o'er the warm earth glide,  
In which every sound, and odor, and beam,  
Move, as reeds in a single stream;

90

Each and all like ministering angels were  
For the Sensitive Plant sweet joy to bear,  
Whilst the lagging hours of the day went by  
Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky.

And when evening descended from heaven above,  
And the Earth was all rest, and the air was all love,  
And delight, though less bright, was far more deep 100  
And the day's veil fell from the world of sleep,

And the beasts, and the birds, and the insects were drowned

In an ocean of dreams without a sound;

Whose waves never mark, though they ever impress  
The light sand which paves it, consciousness;

(Only overhead the sweet nightingale  
Ever sang more sweet as the day might fail,  
And snatches of its Elysian chant  
Were mixed with the dreams of the Sensitive Plant.)

The Sensitive Plant was the earliest  
Up-gathered into the bosom of rest;  
A sweet child weary of its delight,  
The feeblest and yet the favorite,  
Cradled within the embrace of night.

110

#### PART SECOND

There was a Power in this sweet place,  
An Eve in this Eden; a ruling grace  
Which to the flowers did they waken or dream,  
Was as God is to the starry scheme.

A Lady, the wonder of her kind,  
Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind

120

Which, dilating, had moulded her mien and motion  
Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the ocean,

Tended the garden from morn to even :  
And the meteors of that sublunar heaven,  
Like the lamps of the air when night walks forth,  
Laughed round her footsteps up from the Earth !

She had no companion of mortal race,  
But her tremulous breath and her flushing face  
Told, whilst the morn kissed the sleep from her eyes  
That her dreams were less slumber than Paradise: 130

As if some bright Spirit for her sweet sake  
Had deserted heaven while the stars were awake,  
As if yet around her he lingering were,  
Though the veil of daylight concealed him from her.

Her step seemed to pity the grass it pressed ;  
You might hear by the heaving of her breast,  
That the coming and going of the wind  
Brought pleasure there and left passion behind.

And wherever her airy footstep trod,  
Her trailing hair from the grassy sod  
Erased its light vestige, with shadowy sweep,  
Like a sunny storm o'er the dark green deep.

I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet  
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet;  
I doubt not they felt the spirit that came  
From her glowing fingers through all their frame.

She sprinkled bright water from the stream  
On those that were faint with the sunny beam;  
And out of the cups of the heavy flowers  
She emptied the rain of the thunder showers. 150

She lifted their heads with her tender hands,  
And sustained them with rods and osier bands;  
If the flowers had been her own infants she  
Could never have nursed them more tenderly.

And all killing insects and gnawing worms,  
And things of obscene and unlovely forms,  
She bore in a basket of Indian woof,  
Into the rough woods far aloof,

In a basket, of grasses and wild-flowers full,  
The freshest her gentle hands could pull  
For the poor banished insects, whose intent,  
Although they did ill, was innocent. 160

But the bee and the beam-like ephemeris  
Whose path is the lightning's, and soft moths that kiss

The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm not, did she  
Make her attendant angels be.

And many an antenatal tomb,  
Where butterflies dream of the life to come,  
She left clinging round the smooth and dark  
Edge of the odorous cedar bark.

170

This fairest creature from earliest spring  
Thus moved through the garden ministering  
All the sweet season of summer tide,  
And ere the first leaf looked brown — she died !

### PART THIRD

Three days the flowers of the garden fair,  
Like stars when the moon is awakened, were,  
Or the waves of °Baiae, ere luminous  
She floats up through the smoke of Vesuvius.

And on the fourth, the Sensitive Plant  
Felt the sound of the funeral chant,  
And the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow,  
And the sobs of the mourners deep and low;

180

The weary sound and the heavy breath,  
And the silent motions of passing death,

And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank,  
Sent through the pores of the coffin plank;

The dark grass, and the flowers among the grass,  
Were bright with tears as the crowd did pass;  
From their sighs the wind caught a mournful tone,  
And sate in the pines, and gave groan for groan. 190

The garden, once fair, became cold and foul,  
Like the corpse of her who had been its soul,  
Which at first was lovely as if in sleep,  
Then slowly changed, till it grew a heap  
To make men tremble who never weep.

Swift summer into the autumn flowed,  
And frost in the mist of the morning rode,  
Though the noonday sun looked clear and bright,  
Mocking the spoil of the secret night.

The rose leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,  
Paved the turf and the moss below. 200

The lilies were drooping, and white, and wan,  
Like the head and the skin of a dying man.

And Indian plants, of scent and hue  
The sweetest that ever were fed on dew,

Leaf by leaf, day after day,  
Were massed into the common clay.

And the leaves, brown, yellow, and gray, and red,  
And white with the whiteness of what is dead,  
Like troops of ghosts on the dry wind passed ;  
Their whistling noise made the birds agast. 210

And the gusty winds waked the wingèd seeds,  
Out of their birthplace of ugly weeds,  
Till they clung round many a sweet flower's stem,  
Which rotted into the earth with them.

The water-blooms under the rivulet  
Fell from the stalks on which they were set ;  
And the eddies drove them here and there,  
As the winds did those of the upper air.

Then the rain came down, and the broken stalks, 220  
Were bent and tangled across the walks ;  
And the leafless network of parasite bowers  
Massed into ruin ; and all sweet flowers.

Between the time of the wind and the snow,  
All loathliest weeds began to grow,  
Whose coarse leaves were splashed with many a speck,  
Like the water-snake's belly and the toad's back.

And thistles, and nettles, and darnels rank,  
And the dock, and henbane, and hemlock dank,  
Stretched out its long and hollow shank,  
And stifled the air till the dead wind stank.

230

And plants at whose names the verse feels loath,  
Filled the place with a monstrous undergrowth,  
Prickly, and pulpous, and blistering, and blue,  
Livid, and starred with a lurid dew.

And agarics and fungi, with mildew and mould  
Started like mist from the wet ground cold ;  
Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead  
With a spirit of growth had been animated !

Their moss rotted off them flake by flake,  
Till the thick stalk stuck like a murderer's stake,  
Where rags of loose flesh yet tremble on high,  
Infecting the winds that wander by.

240

Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum,  
Made the running rivulet thick and dumb,  
And at its outlet flags huge as stakes  
Dammed it up with roots knotted like water-snakes.

And hour by hour, when the air was still,  
The vapors arose which have strength to kill :

At morn they were seen, at noon they were felt,  
At night they were darkness no star could melt.

250

And unctuous meteors from spray to spray  
Crept and flitted in broad noonday  
Unseen; every branch on which they alit  
By a venomous blight was burned and bit.

The Sensitive Plant like one forbid  
Wept, and the tears within each lid  
Of its folded leaves which together grew  
Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

For the leaves soon fell, and the branches soon  
By the heavy axe of the blast were hewn;  
The sap shrank to the root through every pore,  
As blood to a heart that will beat no more.

260

For winter came: the wind was his whip:  
One choppy finger was on his lip:  
He had torn the cataracts from the hills  
And they clanked at his girdle like manacles;

His breath was a chain which without a sound  
The earth, and the air, and the water bound;  
He came, fiercely driven, in his chariot-throne  
By the tenfold blasts of the Arctic zone.

270

Then the weeds which were forms of living death  
Fled from the frost to the earth beneath.  
Their decay and sudden flight from frost  
Was but like the vanishing of a ghost!

And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant  
The moles and the dormice died for want;  
The birds dropped stiff from the frozen air  
And were caught in the branches naked and bare.

First there came down a thawing rain  
And its dull drops froze on the boughs again,  
Then there steamed up a freezing dew  
Which to the drops of the thaw-rain grew;

280

And a northern whirlwind, wandering about  
Like a wolf that had smelt a dead child out,  
Shook the boughs thus laden, and heavy and stiff,  
And snapped them off with his rigid griff.

When winter had gone and spring came back  
The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck;  
But the mandrakes, and toadstools, and docks, and  
darnels,  
Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels.

290

## CONCLUSION

Whether the Sensitive Plant, or that  
Which within its boughs like a spirit sat  
Ere its outward form had known decay,  
Now felt this change, I cannot say.

Whether that lady's gentle mind,  
No longer with the form combined  
Which scattered love, as stars do light  
Found sadness, where it left delight,

I dare not guess; but in this life  
Of error, ignorance, and strife,  
Where nothing is, but all things seem,  
And we the shadows of the dream,

It is a modest creed, and yet  
Pleasant if one considers it,  
To own that death itself must be,  
Like all the rest, a mockery.

That garden sweet, that lady fair,  
And all sweet shapes and odor there,  
In truth have never past away:  
'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed; not they.

304

310

For love and beauty and delight,  
There is no death nor change : their might  
Exceeds our organs, which endure  
No light, being themselves obscure.

## TO WORDSWORTH

Poet of Nature, thou hast wept to know  
That things depart which never may return :  
°Childhood and youth, friendship and love's first glow,  
Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn.  
These common woes I feel. One loss is mine  
Which thou too feel'st, yet I alone deplore.  
°Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine  
On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar :  
Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood  
Above the blind and battling multitude :      10  
In honored poverty thy voice did weave  
Songs consecrate to truth and liberty, —  
°Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,  
Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.

## TO COLERIDGE

ΔΑΚΡΥΣΙ ΔΙΟΙΣΩ ΠΟΤΜΟΝ ΑΠΟΤΜΟΝ ·

O II ! there are <sup>°</sup>spirits of the air,  
 And genii of the evening breeze,  
 And gentle ghosts, with eyes as fair  
 As star-beams among twilight trees : —  
 Such lovely ministers to meet  
 Oft hast thou turned from men thy lonely feet.

With <sup>°</sup>mountain winds, and babbling springs,  
 And moonlight seas, that are the voice  
 Of these inexplicable things  
 Thou didst hold commune, and rejoice  
 When they did answer thee ; but they  
 Cast, like a worthless boon, thy love away.

10

And thou hast sought in starry eyes  
 Beams that were never meant for thine,  
 Another's wealth : — tame sacrifice  
 To a fond faith ! still dost thou pine ?  
 Still dost thou hope that greeting hands,  
 Voice, looks, or lips, may answer thy demands ?

Ah! wherefore didst thou build thine hope  
 On the false earth's inconstancy ?  
 Did thine own mind afford no scope  
 Of love, or moving thoughts to thee ?  
 That natural scenes or human smiles  
 Could steal the power to wind thee in their wiles.

Yes, all the faithless smiles are fled  
 Whose falsehood left thee broken-hearted ;  
 °The glory of the moon is dead ;  
 Night's ghosts and dreams have now departed ;  
 Thine own soul still is true to thee,  
 But changed to a °foul fiend through misery.

This fiend, whose ghastly presence ever  
 Beside thee like thy shadow hangs,  
 Dream not to chase ; — the mad endeavor  
 Would scourge thee to severer pangs.  
 Be as thou art. Thy settled fate,  
 Dark as it is, all change would aggravate.

## MONT BLANC

LINES WRITTEN IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI

## I

THE everlasting universe of things  
 Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,

Now dark — now glittering — now reflecting gloom —  
Now lending splendor, where from secret springs  
The source of human thought its tribute brings  
Of waters, — with a sound but half its own,  
Such as a feeble brook will oft assume  
In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,  
Where waterfalls around it leap forever,  
Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river      10  
Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.

## II

Thus thou, Ravine of Arve — dark, deep Ravine —  
Thou many-colored, many-voicèd vale,  
Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns sail  
Fast cloud-shadows and sunbeams : awful scene,  
Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down  
From the ice gulfs that gird his secret throne,  
Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame  
Of lightning through the tempest ; — thou dost lie,      20  
Thy giant brood of pines around thee clinging,  
Children of elder time, in whose devotion  
The chainless winds still come and ever came  
To drink their odors, and their mighty swinging  
To hear — an old and solemn harmony ;

Thine earthly rainbows stretched across the sweep  
Of the ethereal waterfall, whose veil  
Robes some unsculptured image ; the strange sleep  
Which when the voices of the desert fail  
Wraps all in its own deep eternity ; —  
Thy caverns echoing to the Arve's commotion,      30  
A loud, lone sound no other sound can tame ;  
Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,  
Thou art the path of that unresting sound —  
Dizzy Ravine ! and when I gaze on thee  
I seem as in a trance sublime and strange  
To muse on my own separate fantasy,  
My own, my human mind, which passively  
Now renders and receives fast influencings,  
Holding an unremitting interchange  
With the clear universe of things around ;      40  
One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings  
Now float above thy darkness, and now rest  
Where that or thou art no unbidden guest,  
In the still cave of the witch Poesy,  
Seeking among the shadows that pass by  
Ghosts of all things that are, some shade of thee,  
Some phantom, some faint image ; till the breast  
From which they fled recalls them, thou art there !

## III

Some say that gleams of a remoter world  
Visit the soul in sleep,— that death is slumber,  
And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber  
Of those who wake and live. — I look on high;  
Has some unknown omnipotence unfurled  
The veil of life or death? or do I lie  
In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep  
Spread far around and inaccessible  
Its circles? For the very spirit fails,  
Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep  
That vanishes among the viewless gales!  
Far, °far above, piercing the infinite sky,  
Mont Blane appears,— still, snowy, and serene—  
Its subject mountains their unearthly forms  
Pile around it, ice and rock; broad vales between  
Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,  
Blue as the overhanging heaven, that spread  
And wind among the accumulated steeps;  
A desert peopled by the storms alone,  
Save when the eagle brings some hunter's bone,  
And the wolf tracks her there — how hideously  
Its shapes are heaped around! rude, bare, and high,  
Ghastly, and scarred, and riven. — Is this the scene  
50  
60  
70

Where the old Earthquake-dæmon taught her young  
 Ruin ? Were these their toys ? or did a sea  
 Of fire envelop once this silent snow ?  
 None can reply — all seems eternal now.  
 The wilderness has a mysterious tongue  
 Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,  
 So solemn, so serene, that man may be  
 But for such faith with Nature reconciled ;  
 Thou hast a voice, °great Mountain, to repeal  
 Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood  
 By all, but which the wise, and great, and good  
 Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

80

## IV

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams,,  
 Ocean, and all the living things that dwell  
 Within the dædal earth; lightning and rain,  
 Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,  
 The torpor of the year when feeble dreams  
 Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep  
 Holds every future leaf and flower; — the bound  
 With which from that detested trance they leap;  
 The works and ways of man, their death and birth,  
 And that of him and all that his may be;  
 All things that move and breathe with toil and sound

90

Are born and die; revolve, subside, and swell.

\*Power dwells apart in its tranquillity

Remote, serene, and inaccessible:

And *this*, the naked countenance of earth,

On which I gaze, even these primeval mountains

Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers creep      100

Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far  
fountains,

Slow rolling on; there, many a precipice,

Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal power

Have piled: dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,

A city of death, distinct with many a tower

And wall impregnable of beaming ice.

Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin

Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky

Rolls its perpetual stream; vast pines are strewing

Its destined path, or in the mangled soil      110

Branchless and shattered stand; the rocks, drawn  
down

From yon remotest waste, have overthrown

The limits of the dead and living world,

Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place

Of insects, beasts, and birds, becomes its spoil;

Their food and their retreat forever gone,

So much of life and joy is lost. The race

Of man flies far in dread; his work and dwelling  
Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,  
And their place is not known. Below, vast caves 120  
Shine in the rushing torrents' restless gleam.  
Which from those secret chasms a tumult welling  
Meet in the vale, and one majestic River,  
The breath and blood of distant lands, forever  
Rolls its loud waters to the ocean waves,  
Breathes its swift vapors to the circling air.

## v

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high: — the power is  
there,  
The still and "solemn power of many sights,  
And many sounds, and much of life and death.  
In the calm darkness of the moonless nights,  
In the lone glare of day, the snows descend 130  
Upon that Mountain; none beholds them there,  
Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,  
Or the star-beams dart through them: — Winds contend  
Silently there, and heap the snow with breath  
Rapid and strong, but silently! Its home  
The voiceless lightning in these solitudes  
Keeps innocently, and like vapor broods  
Over the snow. The secret strength of things

Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome      140  
Of heaven is as a law, inhabits thee !  
And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,  
If to the human mind's imaginings  
Silence and solitude were vacancy ?

*July 23, 1816.*

## HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY

### I

THE awful shadow of some <sup>o</sup>unseen Power  
Floats though unseen amongst us,— visiting  
This various world with as inconstant wing  
As summer winds that creep from flower to flower,—  
Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain  
shower,  
It visits with inconstant glance  
Each human heart and countenance ;  
Like hues and harmenies of evening,—  
Like clouds in starlight widely spread,—  
Like memory of music fled,—      10  
Like aught that for its grace may be  
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

## II

Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost consecrate  
 With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon  
 Of human thought or form,— where art thou gone ?  
 Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,  
 This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate ?

Ask why the sunlight not forever  
 Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain river,  
 Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown, 20  
 Why fear and dream and death and birth  
 Cast on the daylight of this earth  
 Such gloom,— why man has such a scope  
 For love and hate, despondency and hope ?

## III

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever  
 To sage or poet these responses given —  
 Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven,  
 Remain the records of their vain endeavor,  
 Frail spells — whose uttered charm might not avail to  
 sever,  
 From all we hear and all we see, 30  
 Doubt, chance, and mutability.  
 Thy light alone — like mist o'er mountains driven,

Or music by the night wind sent,  
 Through strings of some still instrument,  
 Or moonlight on a midnight stream,  
 Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

## IV

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds depart  
 And come, for some uncertain moments lent,  
 Man were immortal, and omnipotent,  
 Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,      40  
 Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his  
 heart.  
 Thou messenger of sympathies,  
 That wax and wane in lovers' eyes—  
 Thou—that to human thought art nourishment,  
 Like darkness to a dying flame !  
 Depart not as thy shadow came,  
 Depart not—lest the grave should be,  
 Like life and fear, a dark reality.

## V

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped  
 Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin, 50  
 And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing  
 Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.

I called on poisonous names with which our youth is  
fed;

I was not heard — I saw them not —  
When musing deeply on the lot  
Of life, at the sweet time when winds are wooing  
All vital things that wake to bring  
News of birds and blossoming, —  
Sudden, thy shadow fell on me ;  
I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy ! . . . . .

## VI

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers  
To thee and thine — have I not kept the vow ?  
With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now  
I call the phantoms of a thousand hours  
Each from his voiceless grave : they have in visioned  
bowers  
Of studious zeal or love's delight  
Outwatched with me the envious night —  
They know that never joy illumed my brow  
Unlinked with hope that thou wouldest free  
This world from its dark slavery,  
That thou — O awful LOVELINESS,  
Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

VII

The day becomes more solemn and serene  
When noon is past — there is a harmony  
In autumn, and a lustre in its sky,  
Which through the summer is not heard or seen,  
As if it could not be, as if it had not been !

Thus let thy power, which like the truth  
Of nature on my passive youth  
Descended, to my onward life supply  
Its calm — to one who worships thee,  
And every form containing thee,  
Whom, **SPIRIT** fair, thy spells did bind  
To fear himself, and love all human kind.

80

## TO CONSTANTIA, SINGING

I

THUS to be lost and thus to sink and die,  
Perchance were death indeed! — Constantia, turn!  
In thy dark eyes a power like light doth lie,  
Even though the sounds which were thy voice, which  
burn  
Between thy lips, are laid to sleep;  
Within thy breath, and on thy hair, like odor it is yet,

And from thy touch like fire doth leap.

Even while I write, my burning cheeks are wet,

Alas, that the torn heart can bleed, but not forget!

## II

A breathless awe, like the swift change

10

Unseen, but felt in youthful slumbers,

Wild, sweet, but uncommunicably strange,

Thou breathest now in fast ascending numbers.

The cope of heaven seems rent and cloven

By the enchantment of thy strain,

And on my shoulders wings are woven,

To follow its sublime career,

Beyond the mighty moons that wane

Upon the verge of nature's utmost sphere,

Till the world's shadowy walls are past and dis-

appear.

20

## III

Her voice is hovering o'er my soul — it lingers

O'ershadowing it with soft and lulling wings,

The blood and life within those snowy fingers

Teach witchcraft to the instrumental strings.

My brain is wild, my breath comes quick —

The blood is listening in my frame,

And thronging shadows, fast and thick,

Fall on my overflowing eyes;  
 My heart is quivering like a flame;  
 As morning dew, that in the sunbeam dies,      30  
 I am dissolved in these consuming ecstasies.

## IV

I have no life, Constantia, now, but thee,  
 Whilst, like the world-surrounding air, thy song  
 Flows on, and fills all things with melody.—

Now is thy voice a tempest swift and strong,  
 On which, like one in trance upborne,  
 Secure o'er rocks and waves I sweep,  
 Rejoicing like a cloud of morn.

Now 'tis the breath of summer night,  
 Which when the starry waters sleep,      40  
 Round western isles, with incense-blossoms bright,  
 Lingering, suspends my soul in its voluptuous flight.

## HYMN OF APOLLO

## I

THE sleepless Hours who watch me as I lie,  
 Curtained with star-inwoven tapestries,  
 From the broad moonlight of the sky,  
 Fanning the busy dreams from my dim eyes,—

Waken me when their Mother, the gray Dawn,  
Tells them that dreams and that the moon is gone.

## II

Then I arise, and climbing Heaven's blue dome,  
I walk over the mountains and the waves,  
Leaving my robe upon the ocean foam ;  
My footsteps pave the clouds with fire ; the caves  
Are filled with my bright presence, and the air     II  
Leaves the green earth to my embraces bare.

## III

The sunbeams are my shafts, with which I kill  
Deceit, that loves the night and fears the day ;  
All men who do or even imagine ill  
Fly me, and from the glory of my ray  
Good minds and open actions take new might,  
Until diminished by the reign of night.

## IV

I feed the clouds, the rainbows and the flowers  
With their ethereal colors; the Moon's globe     20  
And the pure stars in their eternal bowers  
Are cinctured with my power as with a robe;

Whatever lamps on Earth or Heaven may shine,  
Are portions of one power, which is mine.

## V

I stand at noon upon the peak of Heaven,  
Then with unwilling steps I wander down  
Into the clouds of the Atlantic even ;  
For grief that I depart they weep and frown :  
What look is more delightful than the smile      29  
With which I soothe them from the western isle?

## VI

I am the eye with which the Universe  
Beholds itself and knows itself divine ;  
All harmony of instrument or verse,  
All propheey, all medicine are mine,  
All light of art or nature ; — to my song,  
Victory and praise in their own right belong.

## HYMN OF PAN

## I

FROM the forests and highlands  
We come, we come ;  
From the river-girt islands,  
Where loud waves are dumb

10

Listening to my sweet pipings.  
 The wind in the reeds and the rushes,  
 The bees on the bells of thyme,  
 The birds on the myrtle bushes,  
 The cicale above in the lime,  
 And the lizards below in the grass,  
 Were as silent as ever old Tmolus was  
 Listening to my sweet pipings.

## II

Liquid Peneus was flowing,  
 And all dark Tempe lay  
 In Pelion's shadow, outgrowing  
 The light of the dying day,  
 Speeded by my sweet pipings.  
 The Sileni, and Sylvans, and Fauns,  
 And the Nymphs of the woods and waves,  
 To the edge of the moist river-lawns,  
 And the brink of the dewy caves,  
 And all that did then attend and follow  
 Were silent with love, as you now, Apollo,  
 With envy of my sweet pipings.

## III

I sang of the dancing stars,  
 I sang of the dædal Earth,

And of Heaven—and the giant wars,  
 And Love, and Death, and Birth,—  
 And then I changed my pipings,—  
 Singing how down the vale of Menalus      30  
 I pursued a maiden and clasped a reed:  
 Gods and men, we are all deluded thus!  
 It breaks in our bosom and then we bleed:  
 All wept, as I think both ye now would,  
 If envy or age had not frozen your blood,  
 At the sorrow of my sweet pipings.

## ARETHUSA

## I

<sup>°</sup>ARETHUSA arose  
 From her couch of snows  
 In the Acroceraunian mountains,—  
 From cloud and from crag,  
 With many a jag,  
 Shepherding her bright fountains.  
 She leaped down the rocks,  
 With her rainbow locks  
 Streaming among the streams;—  
 Her steps paved with green

The downward ravine  
 Which slopes to the western gleams :  
     And gliding and springing  
     She went, ever singing,  
 In murmurs as soft as sleep ;  
     The earth seemed to love her,  
     And Heaven smiled above her,  
 As she lingered towards the deep.

## II

Then Alpheus bold,  
 On his glacier cold,  
 With his trident the mountains strook  
     And opened a chasm  
     In the rocks ; — with the spasm  
 All Erymanthus shook.  
     And the black south wind  
     It concealed behind  
 The urns of the silent snow,  
     And earthquake and thunder  
     Did rend in sunder  
 The bars of the springs below ;  
     The beard and the hair  
     Of the River-god were  
 Seen through the torrent's sweep,

20

30

As he followed the light  
Of the fleet nymph's flight  
To the brink of the Dorian deep.

## III

"Oh, save me! Oh, guide me!  
And bid the deep hide me,  
For he grasps me now by the hair!"

40

The loud Ocean heard,  
To its blue depth stirred,  
And divided at her prayer;  
And under the water  
The Earth's white daughter  
Fled like a sunny beam;  
Behind her descended  
Her billows, unblended  
With the brackish Dorian stream:—

Like a gloomy stain  
On the emerald main  
Alpheus rushed behind,—  
As an eagle pursuing  
A dove to its ruin  
Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

50

## IV

Under the bowers  
Where the Ocean Powers  
Sit on their pearlèd thrones,  
Through the coral woods  
Of the weltering floods,  
Over heaps of unvalued stones; 60  
Through the dim beams  
Which amid the streams  
Weave a network of colored light;  
And under the caves,  
Where the shadowy waves  
Are as green as the forest's night: —  
Outspeeding the shark,  
And the sword-fish dark,  
Under the ocean foam,  
And up through the rifts 70  
Of the mountain clifts  
They pass to their Dorian home.

## V

And now from their fountains  
In Enna's mountains,  
Down one vale where the morning basks,

Like friends once parted  
 Grown single-hearted,  
 They ply their watery tasks.  
 At sunrise they leap  
 From their cradles steep  
 In the cave of the shelving hill ;  
 At noontide they flow  
 Through the woods below  
 And the meadows of Asphodel ;  
 And at night they sleep  
 In the rocking deep  
 Beneath the Ortygian shore ; —  
 Like spirits that lie  
 In the azure sky  
 When they love but live no more.

80

90

## SONG OF PROSERPINE

WHILE GATHERING FLOWERS ON THE PLAIN OF ENNA

## I

SACRED Goddess, Mother Earth,  
 Thou from whose immortal bosom,  
 Gods, and men, and beasts have birth,  
 Leaf and blade, and bud and blossom,

Breathe thine influence most divine  
On thine own child, Proserpine.

## II

If with mists of evening dew  
Thou dost nourish these young flowers  
Till they grow, in scent and hue,  
Fairest children of the hours,  
Breathe thine influence most divine  
On thine own child, Proserpine.

10

## SONG

## I

RARELY, rarely, comest thou,  
Spirit of Delight!  
Wherfore hast thou left me now  
Many a day and night?  
Many a weary night and day  
'Tis since thou art fled away.

## II

How shall ever one like me  
Win thee back again?

With the joyous and the free  
 Thou wilt scoff at pain.  
 Spirit false! thou hast forgot  
 All but those who need thee not.

10

## III

As a lizard with the shade  
 Of a trembling leaf,  
 Thou with sorrow art dismayed;  
 Even the sighs of grief  
 Reproach thee, that thou art not near,  
 And reproach thou wilt not hear.

## IV

Let me set my mournful ditty  
 To a merry measure,  
 Thou wilt never come for pity,  
 Thou wilt come for pleasure.  
 Pity then will cut away  
 Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay.

## V

I love all that thou lovest,  
 Spirit of Delight!  
 The fresh Earth in new leaves dressed,

And the starry night;  
 Autumn evening, and the morn  
 When the golden mists are born.

30

## VI

I love snow and all the forms  
 Of the radiant frost;  
 I love waves, and winds, and storms,  
 Every thing almost  
 Which is Nature's, and may be  
 Untainted by man's misery.

## VII

I love tranquil solitude,  
 And such society  
 As is quiet, wise, and good;  
 Between thee and me  
 What difference? but thou dost possess  
 The things I seek, not love them less.

40

## VIII

I love Love — though he has wings,  
 And like light can flee,  
 But above all other things,  
 Spirit, I love thee —

Thou art love and life ! Oh come,  
Make once more my heart thy home.

## TO —

MUSIC, when soft voices die,  
Vibrates in the memory —  
Odors, when sweet violets sicken,  
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,  
Are heaped for the belovèd's bed;  
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone  
Love itself shall slumber on.

## LINES

WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGANEAN HILLS

October, 1818

MANY a green isle needs must be  
In the deep wide sea of misery,  
Or the mariner, worn and wan,  
Never thus could voyage on  
Day and night, and night and day,

Drifting on his dreary way,  
With the solid darkness black  
Closing round his vessel's track ;  
Whilst above, the sunless sky,  
Big with clouds, hangs heavily,  
And behind the tempest fleet  
Hurries on with lightning feet,  
Riving sail, and cord, and plank,  
Till the ship has almost drank  
Death from the o'er-brimming deep ;  
And sinks down, down, like that sleep  
When the dreamer seems to be  
Weltering through eternity ;  
And the dim low line before  
Of a dark and distant shore  
Still recedes, as ever still  
Longing with divided will,  
But no power to seek or shun,  
He is ever drifted on  
O'er the unreposing wave  
To the haven of the grave.  
What, if there no friends will greet ;  
What, if there no heart will meet  
His with love's impatient beat ;  
Wander wheresoe'er he may,

10

20

30

Can he dream before that day  
 To find refuge from distress  
 In friendship's smile, in love's caress ?  
 Then 'twill wreak him little woe  
 Whether such there be or no :  
 Senseless is the breast, and cold,  
 Which relenting love would fold ;  
 Bloodless are the veins and chill  
 Which the pulse of pain did fill ;  
 Every little living nerve  
                                 40  
 That from bitter words did swerve  
 Round the tortured lips and brow,  
 Are like sapless leaflets now  
 Frozen upon December's bough.

On the beach of a northern sea  
 Which tempests shake eternally,  
 As once the wretch there lay to sleep,  
 Lies a solitary heap,  
 One white skull and seven dry bones  
 On the margin of the stones,  
                                 50  
 Where a few gray rushes stand  
 Boundaries of the sea and land :  
 Nor is heard one voice of wail  
 But the sea-mews, as they sail

O'er the billows of the gale;  
Or the whirlwind up and down  
Howling, like a slaughtered town,  
When a king in glory rides  
Through the pomp of fratricides:  
Those unburied bones around  
There is many a mournful sound  
There is no lament for him,  
Like a sunless vapor, dim,  
Who once clothed with life and thought  
What now moves nor murmurs not.

60

Aye, many flowering islands lie  
In the waters of wide Agony:  
To such a one this morn was led,  
My bark by soft winds piloted:  
Mid the mountains Euganean  
I stood listening to the pæan,  
With which the legioned rooks did hail  
The sun's uprise majestic;  
Gathering round with wings all hoar,  
Through the dewy mist they soar  
Like gray shades, till the eastern heaven  
Bursts, and then, as clouds of even,  
Flecked with fire and azure, lie

70

In the unfathomable sky,  
So their plumes of purple grain,  
Starred with drops of golden rain,  
Gleam above the sunlight woods,  
As in silent multitudes  
On the morning's fitful gale  
Through the broken mist they sail,  
And the vapors cloven and gleaming  
Follow down the dark steep streaming,  
Till all is bright, and clear, and still,  
Round the solitary hill.

Beneath is spread like a green sea  
The waveless plain of Lombardy,  
Bounded by the vaporous air,  
Islanded by cities fair;  
Underneath day's azure eyes  
Ocean's nursling, Venice lies,  
A peopled labyrinth of walls,  
Amphitrite's destined halls,  
Which her hoary sire now paves  
With his blue and beaming waves.  
Lo! the sun upsprings behind,  
Broad, red, radiant, half reclined  
On the level quivering line

80

90

100

Of the waters crystalline;  
And before that chasm of light,  
As within a furnace bright,  
Column, tower, and dome, and spire,  
Shine like obelisks of fire,  
Pointing with inconstant motion  
From the altar of dark ocean  
To the sapphire-tinted skies;  
As the flames of sacrifice  
From the marble shrines did rise,  
As to pierce the dome of gold  
Where Apollo spoke of old.

110

Sun-girt City, thou hast been  
°Ocean's child, and then his queen;

Now is come a darker day,  
And thou soon must be his prey,  
If the power that raised thee here  
Hallow so thy watery bier.

120

A less drear ruin then than now,  
With thy conquest-branded brow  
Stooping to the °slave of slaves  
From thy throne, among the waves  
Wilt thou be, when the sea-mew  
Flies, as once before it flew,

O'er thine isles depopulate,  
And all is in its ancient state,  
Save where many a palace gate  
With green sea-flowers overgrown  
Like a rock of ocean's own,  
Topples o'er the abandoned sea  
As the tides change sullenly.

The fisher on his watery way,  
Wandering at the close of day,  
Will spread his sail and seize his oar  
Till he pass the gloomy shore,  
Lest thy dead should, from their sleep  
Bursting o'er the starlight deep,  
Lead a rapid masque of death  
O'er the waters of his path.

130

140

Those who alone thy towers behold  
Quivering through aërial gold,  
As I now behold them here,  
Would imagine not they were  
Sepulchres, where human forms,  
Like pollution-nourished worms  
To the corpse of greatness cling,  
Murdered, and now mouldering:  
But if Freedom should awake

150

In her omnipotence, and shake  
From the <sup>o</sup>Celtic Anarch's hold  
All the keys of dungeons cold,  
Where a hundred cities lie  
Chained like thee, ingloriously,  
Thou and all thy sister band  
Might adorn this sunny land,  
Twining <sup>o</sup>memories of old time  
With new virtues more sublime;  
If not, perish thou and they,  
Clouds which stain truth's rising day  
By her sun consumed away,  
Earth can spare ye: while like flowers,  
In the waste of years and hours,  
From your dust new nations spring  
With more kindly blossoming.  
Perish — let there only be  
Floating o'er thy heartless sea  
As the garment of thy sky  
Clothes the world immortally,  
One remembrance, more sublime  
Than the tattered pall of time,  
Which scarce hides thy visage wan; —  
That a <sup>o</sup>tempest-cleaving Swan  
Of the songs of Albion,

160

170

Driven from his ancestral streams  
By the might of <sup>o</sup>evil dreams,  
Found a nest in thee ; and Ocean  
Welcomed him with such emotion  
That its joy grew his, and sprung  
From his lips like music flung  
O'er a mighty thunder-fit  
Chastening terror : — what though yet  
Poesy's unfailing River,  
Which through Albion winds forever  
Lashing with melodious wave  
Many a sacred Poet's grave,  
Mourn its latest nursling fled ?  
What though thou with all thy dead  
Searce can for this fame repay  
Aught thine own ? oh, rather say  
Though thy sins and slaveries foul  
Overcloud a sun-like soul ?  
As the ghost of Homer clings  
Round Scamander's wasting springs ;  
As divinest Shakespere's might  
Fills Avon and the world with light  
Like omniscient power which he  
Imaged mid mortality ;  
As the love from Petrarch's urn,

180

190

200

Yet amid yon hills doth burn,  
A quenchless lamp by which the heart  
Sees things unearthly ; — so thou art  
Mighty <sup>o</sup>spirit — so shall be  
The City that did refuge thee.

Lo, the sun floats up the sky  
Like thought-wingèd Liberty,  
Till the universal light  
Seems to level plain and height ;  
From the sea a mist has spread,  
And the beams of morn lie dead  
On the towers of Venice now,  
Like its glory long ago.  
By the skirts of that gray cloud  
Many-domèd Padua proud  
Stands, a peopled solitude,  
Mid the harvest-shining plain,  
Where the peasant heaps his grain  
In the garner of his foe,  
And the milk-white oxen slow  
With the purple vintage strain,  
Heaped upon the creaking wain,  
That the brutal Celt may swill  
Drunken sleep with savage will ;

210

220

And the sickle to the sword  
 Lies unchanged, though many a lord,  
 Like a weed whose shade is poison,  
 Overgrows this region's foison,  
 Sheaves of whom are ripe to come  
 To destruction's harvest-home:  
230  
 Men must reap the things they sow,  
 Force from force must ever flow,  
 Or worse; but 'tis a bitter woe  
 That love or reason cannot change  
 The despot's rage, the slave's revenge.

Padua, thou within whose walls  
 Those mute guests at festivals,  
 Son and Mother, Death and Sin,  
 Played at dice for Ezzelin,  
 Till Death cried, "I win, I win!"  
240  
 And Sin cursed to lose the wager,  
 But Death promised, to assuage her,  
 That he would petition for  
 Her to be made Vice-Emperor,  
 When the destined years were o'er  
 Over all between the Po  
 And the eastern Alpine snow,  
 Under the mighty Austrian.

Sin smiled so as Sin only can,  
 And since that time, aye, long before,  
 Both have ruled from shore to shore,  
 That incestuous pair, who follow  
 Tyrants as the sun the swallow,  
 As Repentance follows Crime,  
 And as changes follow Time.

250

In thine halls the lamp of learning,  
 Padua, now no more is burning ;  
 Like a meteor, whose wild way  
 Is lost over the grave of day,  
 It gleams betrayed and to betray :  
 Once remotest nations came  
 To adore that sacred flame,  
 When it lit not many a hearth  
 On this cold and gloomy earth :  
 Now new fires from antique light  
 Spring beneath the wide world's might ;  
 But their spark lies dead in thee,  
 Trampled out by tyranny.  
 As the Norway woodman quells,  
 In the depth of piny dells,  
 One light flame among the brakes  
 While the boundless forest shakes,

260

270

And its mighty trunks are torn  
By the fire thus lowly born :  
The spark beneath his feet is dead,  
He starts to see the flames it fed  
Howling through the darkened sky  
With a myriad tongues victoriously,  
And sinks down in fear : so thou,  
O Tyranny ! beholdest now  
Light around thee, and thou hearest  
The loud flames ascend, and fearest :  
Grovel on the earth ! aye, hide  
In the dust thy purple pride !

280

Noon descends around me now :  
"Tis the noon of autumn's glow,  
When a soft and purple mist  
Like a vaporous amethyst,  
Or an air dissolvèd star  
Mingling light and fragrance, far  
From the curved horizon's bound  
To the point of heaven's profound,  
Fills the overflowing sky ;  
And the plains that silent lie  
Underneath, the leaves unsodden  
Where the infant frost has trodden

290

With his morning-wingèd feet,  
Whose bright print is gleaming yet;  
And the red and golden vines,  
Piercing with their trellised lines  
The rough, dark-skirted wilderness;  
The dun and bladed grass no less,  
Pointing from this hoary tower  
In the windless air; the flower  
Glimmering at my feet; the line  
Of the olive-sandalled Apennine  
In the south dimly islanded:  
And the Alps, whose snows are spread  
High between the clouds and sun;  
And of living things each one;  
And my spirit which so long  
Darkened this swift stream of song,  
Interpenetrated lie  
By the glory of the sky:  
Be it love, light, harmony,  
Odor, or the soul of all  
Which from heaven like dew doth fall  
Or the mind which feeds this verse  
Peopling the lone universe.  
Noon descends, and after noon  
Autumn's evening meets me soon,

300

310

320

Leading the infantine moon,  
And that one star, which to her  
Almost seems to minister  
Half the crimson light she brings  
From the sunset's radiant springs :  
And the soft dreams of the morn  
(Which like wingèd winds had borne  
To that silent isle, which lies  
Mid remembered agonies,  
The frail bark of this lone being,) 330  
Pass, to other sufferers fleeing,  
And its ancient pilot, Pain,  
Sits beside the helm again.

Other flowering isles must be  
In the sea of life and agony :  
Other spirits float and flee  
O'er that gulf : even now, perhaps,  
On some rock the wild wave wraps,  
With folded wings they waiting sit  
For my bark, to pilot it 340  
To some calm and blooming cove,  
Where for me, and those I love,  
May a windless bower be built,  
Far from passion, pain, and guilt,

In a dell mid lawny hills,  
Which the wild sea-murmur fills,  
And soft sunshine, and the sound  
Of old forests echoing round,  
And the light and smell divine  
Of all flowers that breathe and shine :  
We may live so happy there,  
That the spirits of the air,  
Envyng us, may even entice .  
To our healing paradise  
The polluting multitude ;  
But their rage would be subdued  
By that clime divine and calm,  
And the wind whose wings rain balm  
On the uplifted soul, and leaves  
Under which the bright sea heaves ;  
While each breathless interval  
In their whisperings musical  
The inspired soul supplies  
With its own deep melodies,  
And the love which heals all strife  
Circling, like the breath of life,  
All things in that sweet abode  
With its own mild brotherhood :  
They, not it, would change ; and soon

350

360

370

Every sprite beneath the moon  
Would repent its envy vain,  
And the earth grow young again.

## OZYMANDIAS

I MET a traveller from an <sup>o</sup>antique land  
Who said : "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed:  
And on the pedestal these words appear :  
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings :'      10  
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair !'  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch <sup>o</sup>far away."

## LINES

## I

THE cold earth slept below,  
Above the cold sky shone;  
And all around, with a chilling sound,  
From caves of ice and fields of snow,  
The breath of night like death did flow  
Beneath the sinking moon.

## II

The wintry hedge was black,  
The green grass was not seen,  
The birds did rest on the bare thorn's breast,  
Whose roots, beside the pathway track,      10  
Had bound their folds o'er many a crack,  
Which the frost had made between.

## III

Thine eyes glowed in the glare  
Of the moon's dying light;  
As a fen-fire's beam on a sluggish stream,  
Gleams dimly, so the moon shone there,  
And it yellowed the strings of thy raven hair,  
That shook in the wind of night.

## IV

The moon made thy lips pale, belovèd —  
 The wind made thy bosom chill —  
 The night did shed on thy dear head  
 Its frozen dew, and thou didst lie  
 Where the bitter breath of the naked sky  
 Might visit thee at will.

20

## THE WORLD'S WANDERERS

## I

TELL me, thou star, whose wings of light  
 Speed thee in thy fiery flight,  
 In what cavern of the night  
 Will thy pinions close now ?

## II

Tell me, moon, thou pale and gray  
 Pilgrim of heaven's homeless way,  
 In what depth of night or day  
 Seekest thou repose now ?

## III

Weary wind, who wanderest  
 Like the world's rejected guest,

10

Hast thou still some secret nest  
On the tree or bollow?

## A SUMMER EVENING CHURCHYARD

LECHLADE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

THE wind has swept from the wide atmosphere  
Each vapor that obscured the sunset's ray;  
And pallid Evening twines its beaming hair  
In °duskier braids around the languid eyes of Day:  
Silence and Twilight, unbeloved of men,  
Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen.

They breathe their spells towards the departing day,  
Encompassing the earth, air, stars, and sea;  
Light, sound, and motion own the potent sway,  
Responding to the charm with its own mystery.      10  
The winds are still, or the dry church-tower grass  
Knows not their gentle motions as they pass.

Thou too, aërial Pile! whose pinnacles  
Point from one shrine like pyramids of fire,  
Obeyest in silence their sweet solemn spells,  
Clothing in hues of heaven thy dim and distant spire,

Around whose lessening and invisible height  
Gather among the stars the clouds of night.

The dead are sleeping in their sepulchres :  
And, mouldering as they sleep, a thrilling sound      20  
Half sense, half thought, among the darkness stirs,  
Breathed from their wormy beds all living things  
    around,

And mingling with the still night and mute sky  
Its awful hush is felt inaudibly.

Thus solemnized and softened, death is mild  
And terrorless as this serenest night :  
Here could I hope, like some inquiring child  
Sporting on graves, that death did hide from human  
    sight

Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep  
That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep.      30

## TIME

UNFATHOMABLE Sea ! whose waves are years,  
Ocean of Time, whose waters of deep woe  
Are brackish with the salt of human tears !

Thou shoreless flood, which in thy ebb and flow  
Claspest the limits of mortality !

And sick of prey, yet howling on for more,  
 Vomitest thy wrecks on its inhospitable shore;  
 Treacherous in calm, and terrible in storm,  
 Who shall put forth on thee,  
 Unfathomable Sea ?

10

## TO NIGHT

## I

SWIFTLY walk over the western wave,  
 Spirit of Night !  
 Out of the misty eastern cave,  
 Where all the long and lone daylight,  
 Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,  
 Which make thee terrible and dear,—  
 Swift be thy flight !

## II

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,  
 Star-inwrought !  
 Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day  
 Kiss her until she be wearied out,  
 Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,  
 Touching all with thine opiate wand—  
 Come, long sought !

11

## III

When I arose and saw the dawn,  
I sighed for thee ;  
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,  
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,  
And the weary day turned to his rest,  
Lingering like an unloved guest,  
I sighed for thee.

20

## IV

Thy brother Death came, and cried,  
“Wouldst thou me ?”  
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,  
Murmured like a noontide bee,  
Shall I nestle near thy side ?  
“Wouldst thou me ?”— And I replied,  
“No, not thee !”

## V

Death will come when thou art dead,  
Soon, too soon—  
Sleep will come when thou art fled ;  
Of neither would I ask the boon  
I ask of thee, belovèd Night —  
Swift be thine approaching flight,  
Come soon, soon !

30

## A LAMENT

## I

O WORLD! O life! O time!  
On whose last steps I climb

Trembling at that where I had stood before:  
When will return the glory of your prime?

No more—oh, never more!

## II

Out of the day and night  
A joy has taken flight;

Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,  
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight

No more—oh, never more!

10

## STANZAS

WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES

## I

THE sun is warm, the sky is clear,  
The waves are dancing fast and bright,  
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear  
The purple noon's transparent might,

The breath of the moist earth is light,  
 Around its unexpanded buds;  
 Like many a voice of one delight,  
 The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,  
 The City's voice itself is soft like Solitude's.

## II

I see the Deep's untrampled floor 10  
 With green and purple seaweeds strown ;  
 I see the waves upon the shore,  
 Like lights dissolved in star-showers, thrown :  
 I sit upon the sands alone,  
 The lightning of the noontide ocean  
 Is flashing round me, and a tone  
 Arises from its measured motion,  
 How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

## III

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,  
 Nor piece within nor calm around, 20  
 Nor that content surpassing wealth  
 The sage in meditation found,  
 And walked with inward glory crowned —  
 Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.  
 Others I see whom these surround —

Smiling they live, and call life pleasure ; —  
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

## IV

Yet now despair itself is mild,  
Even as the winds and waters are ;  
I could lie down like a tired child,      30  
And weep away the life of care  
Which I have borne and yet must bear,  
Till death like sleep might steal on me,  
And I might feel in the warm air  
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea  
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

## V

Some might lament that I were cold,  
As I, when this sweet day is gone,  
Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,  
Insults with this untimely moan ;      40  
They might lament — for I am one  
Whom men love not, — and yet regret,  
Unlike this day, which, when the sun  
Shall on its stainless glory set,  
Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet.

## SONGS FROM PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

## A VOICE IN THE AIR SINGING

LIFE of Life ! thy lips enkindle  
With their love the breath between them ;  
And thy smiles before they dwindle  
Make the cold air fire ; then screen them  
In those looks, where whoso gazes  
Faints, entangled in their mazes.

Child of Light ! thy limbs are burning  
Through the vest which seems to hide them ;  
As the radiant lines of morning  
Through the clouds ere they divide them ;      10  
And this atmosphere divinest  
Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.

Fair are others ; none beholds thee,  
But thy voice sounds low and tender  
Like the fairest, for it folds thee  
From the sight, that liquid splendor,  
And all feel, yet see thee never,  
As I feel now, lost forever !

Lamp of Earth ! where'er thou movest  
 Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,  
 And the soul of whom thou lovest  
 Walk upon the winds with lightness,  
 Till they fail, as I am failing,  
 Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing !

20

## ASIA

My soul is an enchanted boat,  
 Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float  
 Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing ;  
 And thine doth like an angel sit  
 Beside a helm conducting it,  
 Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.  
 It seems to float ever, forever,  
 Upon that many-winding river,  
 Between mountains, woods, abysses,  
 A paradise of wildernesses !

10

Till, like one in slumber bound,  
 Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,  
 Into a sea profound, of everspreading sound :

Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions  
 In music's most serene dominions ;  
 Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven.

And we sail on, away, afar,  
Without a course, without a star,  
But, by the instinct of sweet music driven ;  
Till through Elysian garden islets 20  
By thee, most beautiful of pilots,  
Where never mortal pinnace glided,  
The boat of my desire is guided :  
Realms where the air we breathe is love,  
Which in the winds and on the waves doth move,  
Harmonizing this earth with what we feel above.

We have past Age's icy caves,  
And Manhood's dark and tossing waves,  
And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray :  
Beyond the glassy gulfs we flee 30  
Of shadow-peopled Infancy,  
Through Death and Birth, to a diviner day ;  
A paradise of vaulted bowers,  
Lit by downward-gazing flowers,  
And watery paths that wind between  
Wildernesses calm and green,  
Peopled by shapes too bright to see,  
And rest, having beheld ; somewhat like thee ;  
Which walk upon the sea, and chant melodiously !

## ADONAI

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS, AUTHOR  
OF ENDYMION, HYPERION, ETC.

*Αστήρ πρὸν μὲν ἐλαμπεῖς ἐνὶ ζῶοισιν ἔωσ·  
Νῦν δὲ θανὼν λάμπεις ἔσπερος ἐν φθίμενοις.*

— PLATO.

## PREFACE

*Φάρμακον ἦλθε, Βίων, ποτὶ σὸν στόμα, φάρμακον εἶδες.  
Πῶς τεν τοῖς χείλεσσι ποτέδραμε, κούκ ἐγλυκάνθη;  
Τίς δὲ βροτὸς τοσσοῦτον ἀνάμερος, ἢ κεράσαι τοι,  
Ἡ δοῦναι λαλέοντι τὸ φάρμακον; ἔκφυγεν ὡδάν.*

— MOSCHUS, *Epitaph. Bion.*

## I

I WEEP for °Adonais — he is dead !  
Oh, weep for Adonais ! though our tears  
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head !  
And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years  
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,  
And teach them thine own sorrow ! Say : “With me  
Died Adonais ; till the future dares  
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be  
An echo and a light unto eternity !”

## II

Where wert thou, <sup>o</sup>mighty Mother, when he lay,   10  
When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies  
In darkness? where was lorn Urania  
When Adonais died? With veilèd eyes,  
Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise  
She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath,  
Rekindled all the fading melodies,  
With which, like flowers that mock the corse be-  
neath,  
He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of death.

## III

Oh, weep for Adonais—he is dead!  
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep!   20  
Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed  
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep  
Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;  
For he is gone, where all things wise and fair  
Descend;—oh, dream not that the amorous Deep  
Will yet restore him to the vital air;  
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our de-  
spair.

## IV

Most musical of mourners, weep again !  
Lament anew, Urania! — He died,  
Who was the "Sire of an immortal strain," 30  
Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride,  
The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,  
Trampled and mocked with many a loathèd rite  
Of lust and blood ; he went, unterrified,  
Into the gulf of death ; but his clear Sprite  
Yet reigns o'er earth the third among the sons of  
light.

## V

Most musical of mourners, weep anew !  
Not all to that bright station dared to climb ;  
And happier they their happiness who knew,  
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time 40  
In which suns perished ; others more sublime,  
Struck by the envious wrath of man or God,  
Have sunk, extinct in their resplendent prime ;  
And some yet live, treading the thorny road,  
Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene  
abode.

## VI

But now, thy youngest, dearest one has perished,  
The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,  
Like a pale flower by some °sad maiden cherished,  
And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew;  
Most musical of mourners, weep anew !                       50  
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,  
The bloom, whose petals nipped before they blew  
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste ;  
The broken lily lies — the storm is overpassed.

## VII

To that high Capital, where kingly Death  
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,  
He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,  
A grave among the eternal. — Come away !  
Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day  
Is yet his fitting charnel-roof ! while still                       60  
He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay ;  
Awake him not ! surely he takes his fill  
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

## VIII

He will awake no more, oh, never more ! —  
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace,

The shadow of white Death, and at the door  
 Invisible Corruption waits to trace  
 His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place ;  
 The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe  
 Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface      70  
 So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law  
 Of change shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

## IX

Oh, weep for Adonais ! — the "quick Dreams,  
 The passion-wingèd Ministers of thought,  
 Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams  
 Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught  
 The love which was its music, wander not,—  
 Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,  
 But droop there, whence they sprung ; and mourn  
 their lot  
 Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet      80  
 pain,  
 They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.

## X

And one with trembling hands clasps his cold head,  
 And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries ;  
 "Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead ;

See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,  
 Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies  
 A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain.”  
 Lost angel of a ruined Paradise !

She knew not 'twas her own ; as with no stain  
 She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain. 90

## XI

One from a lucid urn of starry dew  
 Washed his light limbs as if embalming them ;  
 Another clipped her profuse locks, and threw  
 The wreath upon him, like an anadem,  
 Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem ;  
 Another in her wilful grief would break  
 Her bow and wingèd reeds, as if to stem  
 A greater loss with one which was more weak ;  
 And dull the barbèd fire against his frozen cheek.

## XII

Another Splendor on his mouth alit, 100  
 That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath  
 Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,  
 And pass into the panting heart beneath  
 With lightning and with musie : the damp death  
 Quenched its caress upon his icy lips ;

And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath  
 Of moonlight vapor, which the cold night clips,  
 It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed to its  
 eclipse.

## XIII

And others came — Desires and Adorations,  
 Wingèd Persuasions and veiled Destinies,      110  
 Splendors, and Gloom's, and glimmering Incarnations  
 Of hopes and fears, and twilight Fantasies ;  
 And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,  
 And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam  
 Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,  
 Came in slow pomp ; — the moving pomp might seem  
 Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

## XIV

All he had loved, and moulded into thought,  
 From shape, and hue, and odor, and sweet sound,  
 Lamented Adonais. Morning sought      120  
 Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,  
 Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,  
 Dimmed the aërial eyes that kindle day ;  
 Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,  
 Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,  
 And the wild winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

## xv

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,  
And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,  
And will no more reply to winds or fountains,      120  
Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray,  
Or herdman's horn, or bell at closing day;  
Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear  
Than those for whose disdain she pined away  
Into a shadow of all sounds:—a drear  
Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear.

## xvi

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw  
down  
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,  
Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown  
For whom should she have waked the sullen year?  
To Phœbus was not Hyæinth so dear      140  
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both  
Thou, Adonais: wan they stand and sere  
Amid the faint companions of their youth,  
With dew all turned to tears, odor, to sighing ruth.

## XVII

Thy spirit's sister, the °lorn nightingale,  
Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain ;  
Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale  
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain  
Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,  
Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,      150  
As Albion wails for thee : the °curse of Cain  
Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,  
And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest !

## XVIII

Ah, woe is me ! Winter is come and gone,  
But grief returns with the revolving year ;  
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone ;  
The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear ;  
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons' bier ;  
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,  
And build their mossy homes in field and brere ; 160  
And the green lizard, and the golden snake,  
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

## XIX

Through wood and stream and field and hill and  
Ocean

A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst  
As it has ever done, with change and motion,  
From the great morning of the world when first  
God dawnd on Chaos; in its stream immersed  
The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light;  
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst;  
Diffuse themselves; and spend in love's delight,

The beauty and the joy of their renewèd might.

## XX

The leprous corpse touched by this spirit tender  
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;  
Like incarnations of the stars, when splendor  
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death  
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath;  
Naught we know, dies. Shall <sup>°</sup>that alone which  
knows

Be as a sword consumed before the sheath  
By sightless lightning? — the <sup>°</sup>intense atom glows  
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose.

## XXI

Alas ! that all we loved of him should be,  
 But for our grief, as if it had not been,  
 And grief itself be mortal ! Woe is me !  
 Whence are we, and why are we ? of what scene  
 The actors or spectators ? Great and mean  
 Meet massed in death, who lends what life must  
 borrow.

As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,  
 Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,  
 Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to  
 sorrow.

## XXII

*He will awake no more, oh, never more !*      190  
 "Wake thou," cried Misery, "childless Mother, rise  
 Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core,  
 A wound more fierce than his with tears and sighs."  
 And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,  
 And all the Echoes whom their sister's song  
 Had held in holy silence, cried : "Arise!"  
 Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,  
 From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendor sprung.

## XXIII

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs  
Out of the East, and follows wild and drear  
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,  
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,  
Has left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear  
So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania :  
So saddened round her like an atmosphere  
Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way  
Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

200

## XXIV

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,  
Through camps and cities rough with stone, and  
steel,  
And human hearts, which to her airy tread  
Yielding not, wounded the invisible  
Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell:  
And barbèd tongues, and thoughts more sharp than  
they  
Rent the soft Form they never could repel,  
Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,  
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

210

## xxv

In the death chamber for a moment Death,  
 Shamed by the presence of that living Might,  
 Blushed to annihilation, and the breath  
 Revisited those lips, and life's pale light      22c  
 Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear delight.  
 "Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,  
 As silent lightning leaves the starless night!  
 Leave me not!" cried Urania: her distress  
 Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and met her  
 vain caress.

## xxvi

"Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;  
 Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;  
 And in my heartless breast and burning brain  
 That word, that kiss shall all thoughts else sur-  
 vive,  
 With food of saddest memory kept alive,      230  
 Now thou art dead, as if it were a part  
 Of thee, my Adonais! I would give  
 All that I am to be as thou now art!  
 But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence de-  
 part!

## XXVII

“O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,  
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men  
Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty  
heart  
Dare the <sup>o</sup>unpastured dragon in his den?  
Defenceless as thou wert, oh, where was then  
<sup>o</sup>Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear? <sup>240</sup>  
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when  
Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,  
The monsters of life’s waste had fled from thee like  
deer.

## XXVIII

“The herded wolves, bold only to pursue ;  
The obscene ravens, clamorous o’er the dead ;  
The vultures to the conqueror’s banner true  
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,  
And whose wings rain contagion ; — how they fled,  
When like Apollo, from his golden bow,  
The <sup>o</sup>Pythian of the age one arrow sped <sup>250</sup>  
And smiled ! — The spoilers tempt no second blow,  
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying  
low.

## XXIX

"The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;  
 He sets, and each ephemeral insect then  
 Is gathered into death without a dawn,  
 And the immortal stars awake again;  
 So is it in the world of living men:  
 A god-like mind soars forth, in its delight  
 Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when  
 It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its  
     light    260  
 Leave to its kindred lamp the spirit's awful night."

## XXX

Thus ceased she: and the mountain shepherds  
 came,  
 Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent;  
 The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame  
 Over his living head like Heaven is bent,  
 An early but enduring monument,  
 Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song  
 In 'sorrow; from her wilds Ierne sent  
 The 'sweetest lyrists of her saddest wrong,  
 And love taught grief to fall like music from his  
     tongue.    270

## XXXI

Midst others of less note, came <sup>°</sup>one frail Form,  
A phantom among men ; companionless  
As the last cloud of an expiring storm  
Whose thunder is its knell ; he, as I guess,  
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,  
Actæon-like, and now he fled astray  
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,  
And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,  
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their  
prey.

## XXXII

A pard-like Spirit beautiful and swift— 280  
A Love in desolation masked ;— a Power  
Girt round with weakness ;— it can scarce uplift  
The weight of the superincumbent hour ;  
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,  
A breaking billow ;— even whilst we speak  
Is it not broken ? On the withering flower  
The killing sun smiles brightly : on a cheek  
The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may  
break.

## XXXIII

His head was bound with pansies overblown,  
 And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue ;      290  
 And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,  
 Round whose rude shaft dark ivy tresses grew  
 Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,  
 Vibrated, as the ever beating heart  
 Shook the weak hand that grasped it ; of that crew  
 He came the last, neglected and apart ;  
 A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.

## XXXIV

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan  
 Smiled through their tears ; well knew that gentle  
 band  
 Who in another's fate now wept his own ;      300  
 As in the accents of an unknown land,  
 He sung new sorrow ; sad Urania scanned  
 The Stranger's mien, and murmured : "Who art  
 thou ?"  
 He answered not, but with a sudden hand  
 Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,  
 Which was like Cain's or Christ's. Oh, that it should  
 be so !

## XXXV

What <sup>o</sup> softer voice is hushed over the dead ?  
Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown ?  
What form leans sadly o'er the white deathbed,  
In mockery of monumental stone,                                   310  
The heavy heart heaving without a moan ?  
If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,  
Taught, soothed, loved, honored the departed  
one ;  
Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs  
The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

## XXXVI

Our Adonais has drunk poison — oh !  
What deaf and viperous murderer could crown  
Life's early cup with such a draught of woe ?  
The nameless worm would now itself disown :  
It felt, yet could escape the magic tone                                   320  
Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,  
But what was howling in one breast alone,  
Silent with expectation of the song,  
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre  
unstrung.

## XXXVII

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame !  
 Live ! fear no heavier chastisement from me,  
 Thou noteless blot on a remembered name !  
 But be thyself, and know thyself to be !  
 And ever at thy season be thou free  
 To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow :      330  
 Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee ;  
 Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,  
 And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt — as now.

## XXXVIII

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled  
 Far from these carrion kites that scream below ;  
 He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead ;  
 Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now.—  
 Dust to the dust ! but the pure spirit shall flow  
 Back to the burning fountain whence it came,  
 A portion of the Eternal, which must glow      340  
 Through time and change, unquenchably the same,  
 Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of  
 shame.

## XXXIX

Peace, peace ! he is not dead, he doth not sleep —  
 He hath awakened from the dream of life —

"Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep  
 With phantoms an unprofitable strife,  
 And in mad tranee, strike with our spirit's knife  
 Invulnerable nothings. — We decay  
 Like corpses in a charnel ; fear and grief  
 Convulse us and consume us day by day,      350  
 And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living  
 clay.

## XL

He has outsoared the shadow of our night ;  
 Envy and calumny and hate and pain,  
 And that unrest, which men miscall delight,  
 Can touch him not and torture not again ;  
 From the contagion of the world's slow stain  
 He is <sup>o</sup>secure, and now can never mourn  
 A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain ;  
 Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,  
 With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.      360

## XLI

He lives, he wakes — 'tis Death is dead, not he ;  
 Mourn not for Adonais. — Thou young Dawn,  
 Turn all thy dew to splendor, for from thee  
 The spirit thou lamentest is not gone ;  
 Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan !

Cease ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air  
 Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown  
 O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare  
 Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair !

## XLII

He is made one with Nature: there is heard      370  
 His voice in all her music, from the moan  
 Of thunder to the song of night's sweet bird ;  
 He is a presence to be felt and known  
 In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,  
 Spreading itself where'er that Power may move  
 Which has withdrawn his being to its own ;  
 Which wields the world with never wearied love,  
 Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

## XLIII

He is a portion of the loveliness  
 Which once he made more lovely : he doth bear      380  
 His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress  
 Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling  
 there

All new successions to the forms they wear ;  
 Torturing the unwilling dross that checks its flight  
 To its own likeness, as each mass may bear ;

And bursting in its beauty and its might  
 From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

## XLIV

The splendors of the firmament of time  
 May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;  
 Like stars to their appointed height they climb, 390  
 And death is a low mist which cannot blot  
 The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought  
 Lifts a young heart above its °mortal lair,  
 And love and life contend in it, for what  
 Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there  
 And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

## XLV

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown  
 Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal  
 thought,  
 Far in the Unapparent. °Chatterton  
 Rose pale, his solemn agony had not 400  
 Yet faded from him; °Sidney, as he fought  
 And as he fell and as he lived and loved  
 Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,  
 Arose; and °Lucan, by his death approved:  
 Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reproved.

## XLVI

And many more, whose names on Earth are dark,  
 But whose transmitted effluence cannot die  
 So long as fire outlives the parent spark,  
 Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.

“Thou art become as one of us,” they cry,      410  
 “It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long  
 Swung blind in unascended majesty,  
 Silent alone amid an °Heaven of Song.

Assume thy wingèd throne, thou Vesper of our  
 throng!”

## XLVII

Who mourns for Adonais? Oh, come forth,  
 Fond °wretch! and know thyself and him aright.  
 Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;  
 As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light  
 Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might  
 Satiate the void circumference: then shrink      420  
 Even to a point within our day and night;  
 And keep thy heart light lest it make thee sink  
 When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the  
 brink.

## XLVIII

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre  
 Oh! not of him, but of our joy : 'tis naught  
 That ages, empires, and religions there  
 Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought ;  
 For such as he can lend, — they borrow not  
 Glory from those who made the world their prey ;  
 And he is gathered to the kings of thought      430  
 Who waged contention with their time's decay,  
 And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

## XLIX

Go thou to Rome, — at once the Paradise,  
 The grave, the city, and the wilderness ;  
 And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise,  
 And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses dress  
 The bones of Desolation's nakedness  
 Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall lead  
 Thy footsteps to a slope of green access  
 Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead,      440  
 A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread.

## L

And gray walls moulder round, on which dull Time  
 Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand :

And one <sup>o</sup>keen pyramid with wedge sublime,  
 Pavilioning the dust of him who planned  
 This refuge for his memory, doth stand  
 Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,  
 A field is spread, on which a newer band  
 Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death  
 Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished  
 breath.

450

## LI

Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet  
 To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned  
 Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,  
 Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,  
 Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find  
 Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,  
 Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind  
 Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.

What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

## LII

The One remains, the many change and pass;      460  
 Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;  
 Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,  
 Stains the white radiance of Eternity,

Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die,  
 If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek !  
 Follow where all is fled !—Rome's azure sky,  
 Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak  
 The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak

## LIII

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart ?  
 Thy hopes are gone before : from all things here <sup>470</sup>  
 They have departed ; thou shouldst now depart !  
 A light is passed from the revolving year.  
 And man, and woman ; and what still is dear  
 Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.  
 The soft sky smiles,—the low wind whispers near ;  
 'Tis Adonais calls ! oh, hasten thither,  
 No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

## LIV

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,  
 That Beauty in which all things work and move,  
 That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse <sup>480</sup>  
 Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love  
 Which through the web of being blindly wove  
 By man and beast and earth and air and sea,

Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of  
The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me,  
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

## LV

The breath whose might I have invoked in song  
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven  
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng  
Whose sails were never to the tempest given; 49c  
The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!  
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;  
Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,  
The soul of Adonais, like a star,  
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

## POEMS FROM KEATS

### ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

#### I

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains  
    My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,  
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains  
    One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk :  
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,  
    But being too happy in thine happiness, —  
    That thou, light-wingèd Dryad of the trees,  
        In some melodious plot  
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,  
    Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

xx

#### II

O, for a draught of vintage ! that hath been  
    Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth,  
Tasting of Flora and the country green,  
    Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth

O, for a beaker full of the warm South,  
 Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,  
     With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,  
     And purple-stainèd mouth;  
 That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,  
     And with thee fade away into the forest dim :   20

## III

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget  
     What thou among the leaves hast never known,  
 The weariness, the fever, and the fret  
     Here, where men sit and hear each other groan ;  
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,  
     Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies ;  
     Where but to think is to be full of sorrow  
         And leaden-eyed despairs,  
 Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,  
     Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.   30

## IV

Away ! away ! for I will fly to thee,  
     Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,  
 But on the viewless wings of Poesy,  
     Though the dull brain perplexes and retards :

Already with thee ! tender is the night,  
 And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,  
 Clustered around by all her starry Fays ;  
 But here there is no light,  
 Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown  
 Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy  
 ways.

40

## v

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,  
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,  
 But, in embalmèd darkness, guess each sweet  
 Wherewith the seasonable month endows  
 The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild ;  
 White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine ;  
 Fast-fading violets covered up in leaves ;  
 And mid-May's eldest child,  
 The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,  
 The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves. 50

## VI

Darkling I listen ; and for many a time  
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,  
 Called him soft names in many a musèd rhyme,  
 To take into the air my quiet breath ;

Now more than ever seems it rich to die,  
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,  
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad  
 In such an ecstasy !  
 Still wouldest thou sing, and I have ears in vain —  
 To thy high requiem become a sod.

60

## VII

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird !  
 No hungry generations tread thee down ;  
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard  
 In ancient days by emperor and clown :  
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path  
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,  
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn ;  
 The same that oft-times hath  
 Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam  
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

70

## VIII

Forlorn ! the very word is like a bell  
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self !  
 Adieu ! the fancy cannot cheat so well  
 As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.  
 Adieu ! adieu ! thy plaintive anthem fades

Past the near meadows, over the still stream,  
 Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep  
     In the next valley-glades:  
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream?  
     Fled is that music:— Do I wake or sleep?

80

## ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

## I

Thou still unravished bride of quietness!  
 Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,  
 Sylvan historian, who canst thus express  
     A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:  
 What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape  
     Of deities or mortals, or of both,  
     In Tempe or the dales of Arealy?  
 What men or gods are these? What maidens loath?  
 What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?  
     What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

## II

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
     Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;  
 Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,

Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone :  
 Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave  
 Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare ;  
 Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,  
 Though winning near the goal — yet, do not grieve ;  
 She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,  
 Forever wilt thou love, and she be fair !

20

## III

Ah, happy, happy boughs ! that cannot shed  
 Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu ;  
 And, happy melodist, unwearied,  
 Forever piping songs forever new ;  
 More happy love ! more happy, happy love !  
 Forever warm and still to be enjoyed,  
 Forever panting, and forever young ;  
 All breathing human passion far above,  
 That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,  
 A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

30

## IV

Who are these coming to the sacrifice ?  
 To what green altar, O mysterious priest,  
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,  
 And all her silken flanks with garlands dressed ?

What little town by river or seashore,  
 Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,  
 Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn ?  
 And, little town, thy streets for evermore  
 Will silent be ; and not a soul to tell  
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

40

## v

Attic shape ! Fair attitude ! with brede  
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,  
 With forest branches and the trodden weed ;  
 Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought  
 As doth eternity : Cold Pastoral !

When old age shall this generation waste,  
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe  
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,  
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty," — that is all  
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

50

## ODE TO PSYCHE

O GODDESS ! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung  
 By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,  
 And pardon that thy secrets should be sung  
 Even into thine own soft-conchèd ear :

Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see  
 The wingèd Psyche with awakened eyes ?  
 I wandered in a forest thoughtlessly,  
 And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,  
 Saw <sup>10</sup>two fair creatures, couchèd side by side  
 In deepest grass, beneath the whisp'ring roof  
 Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran  
 A brooklet, scarce espied :

'Mid hushed, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyed,  
 Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,  
 They lay calm-breathing, on the bedded grass ;  
 Their arms embracèd, and their pinions too ;  
 Their lips touched not, but had not bade adieu,  
 As if disjoinèd by soft-handed slumber,  
 And ready still past kisses to outnumber  
 At tender eye-dawn of aurorean love :  
 The wingèd boy I knew ;  
 But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove ?  
 His Psyche true ! 20

O latest born and loveliest vision far  
 Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy !  
 Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-regioned star,  
 Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky ;

Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,  
 Nor altar heaped with flowers ;  
 Nor virgin-choir to make <sup>o</sup>delicious moan  
 Upon the midnight hours ;  
 No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet  
 From chain-swung censer teeming ;  
 No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat  
 Of pale-mouthed prophet dreaming.

O brightest ! though too late for antique vows,  
 Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,  
 When holy were the haunted forest boughs,  
 Holy the air, the water, and the fire ;  
 Yet even in these days so far retired  
 From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,  
 Fluttering among the faint Olympians,  
 I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspired.  
 So let me be thy choir, and make a moan  
 Upon the midnight hours ;  
 Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet  
 From swingèd censer teeming ;  
 Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat  
 Of pale-mouthed prophet dreaming.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane  
 In some untrodden region of my mind,

30

40

50

Where branchèd thoughts, new grown with pleasant  
    pain,

Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind:

Far, far around shall those dark-clustered trees

    Fledge the wild-ridgèd mountains steep by steep;

And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,

    The moss-lain Dryads shall be lulled to sleep;

And in the midst of this wide quietness

A rosy sanctuary will I dress

With the wreathed trellis of a working brain,

60.

    With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,

With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,

    Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same:

And there shall be for thee all soft delight

    That shadowy thought can win,

A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,

    To let the warm Love in!

## TO AUTUMN

### I

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,

Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;

Conspiring with him how to load and bless

    With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;

To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,  
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;  
     To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells  
 With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,  
 And still more, later flowers for the bees,  
 Until they think warm days will never cease,         <sup>10</sup>  
     For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

## II

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?  
     Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find  
 °Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,  
     Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;  
 Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,  
     Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook  
     Spares the next swath and all its twinèd flowers:  
 And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep  
     Steady thy laden head across a brook;         <sup>20</sup>  
     Or by a cider-press, with patient look,  
     Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

## III

Where are the songs of Spring? Aye, where are they?  
     Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—  
 While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,

And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;  
 Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn  
     Among the river sallows, borne aloft  
     Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;      29  
 And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;  
     Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft  
     The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;  
     And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

## ODE ON MELANCHOLY

## I

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist  
     Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;  
 Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kissed  
     By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;  
 Make not your rosary of yew-berries,  
     Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be  
     Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl  
 A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;  
     For shade to shade will come too drowsily,  
     And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul. 10

## II

But when the melancholy fit shall fall  
 Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,  
 That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,  
 And hides the green hill in an April shroud ;  
 Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,  
 Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,  
 Or on the wealth of globèd peonies ;  
 Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,  
 Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,  
 And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes. 20

## III

She dwells with Beauty — Beauty that must die ;  
 And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips  
 Bidding adieu ; and aching Pleasure nigh,  
 Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips :  
 Aye, in the very temple of Delight  
 Veiled Melancholy has her <sup>o</sup>sovran shrine,  
 Though seen of none save him whose strenuous  
 tongue  
 Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine ;  
 His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,  
 And be among her cloudy trophies hung. 30

## FANCY

EVER let the Fancy roam,  
Pleasure never is at home :  
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,  
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth ;  
Then let wingèd Fancy wander      5  
Through the thought still spread beyond her :  
Open wide the mind's cage-door,  
She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.  
O sweet Fancy ! let her loose ;  
Summer's joys are spoilt by use,      10  
And the enjoying of the Spring  
Fades as does its blossoming ;  
Autumn's red-lipped fruitage too,  
Blushing through the mist and dew,  
Cloys with tasting : What do then ?  
Sit thee by the ingle, when  
The sear faggot blazes bright,  
Spirit of a winter's night ;  
When the soundless earth is muffled,  
And the cakèd snow is shuffled      20  
From the ploughboy's <sup>o</sup>heavy shoon ;  
When the Night doth meet the Noon  
In a dark conspiracy

To banish Even from her sky.  
Sit thee there, and send abroad,  
With a mind self-overawed,  
Fancy, high-commissioned : — send her !  
She has vassals to attend her :  
She will bring, in spite of frost,  
Beauties that the earth hath lost ;      30  
She will bring thee, altogether,  
All delights of summer weather ;  
All the buds and bells of May,  
From dewy sward or thorny spray ;  
All the heaped Autumn's wealth,  
With a still, mysterious stealth :  
She will mix these pleasures up  
Like three fit wines in a cup,  
And thou shalt quaff it : — thou shalt hear  
Distant harvest-carols clear ;      40  
Rustle of the reaped corn ;  
Sweet birds antheming the morn :  
And, in the same moment — hark !  
'Tis the early April lark,  
Or the rooks, with busy caw,  
Foraging for 'sticks and straw.  
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold  
The daisy and the marigold ;

White-plumed lilies, and the first  
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst;      50  
Shaded hyacinth, alway  
Sapphire queen of the mid-May;  
And every leaf, and every flower  
Pearlèd with the self-same shower.  
Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep  
Meagre from its cellèd sleep;  
And the snake all winter-thin  
Cast on sunny bank its skin;  
Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see  
Hatching in the hawthorn-tree,      60  
When the hen-bird's wing doth rest  
Quiet on her mossy nest;  
Then the hurry and alarm  
When the bee-hive cast its swarm;  
Acorns ripe down-pattering,  
While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy! let her loose;  
Everything is spoilt by use:  
Where's the cheek that doth not fade,  
Too much gazed at? Where's the maid      70  
Whose lip mature is ever new?  
Where's the eye, however blue,

Doth not weary? Where's the face  
One would meet in every place?  
Where's the voice, however soft,  
One would hear so very oft?  
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth  
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.  
Let, then, wingèd Fancy find  
Thee a mistress to thy mind:      80  
Dulcet-eyed as 'Ceres' daughter,  
Ere the God of Torment taught her  
How to frown and how to chide;  
With a waist and with a side  
White as Hebe's, when her zone  
Slipped its golden clasp, and down  
Fell her kirtle to her feet,  
While she held the goblet sweet,  
And Jove grew languid.—Break the mesh  
Of the Fancy's silken leash;      90  
Quickly break her prison-string  
And such joys as these she'll bring.—  
Let the wingèd Fancy roam,  
Pleasure never is at home.

*LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI*

## I

Ah, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,  
Alone and palely loitering ?  
The sedge is withered from the lake,  
And no birds sing.

## II

Ah, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,  
So haggard and so woe-begone ?  
The squirrel's granary is full,  
And the harvest's done.

## III

I see a lily on thy brow,  
With anguish moist and fever dew ;  
And on thy cheek a fading rose  
Fast withereth too.

13

## IV

I met a lady in the meads,  
Full beautiful, — a faery's child ;  
Her hair was long, her foot was light,  
And her eyes were wild.

## V

I set her on my pacing steed,  
And nothing else saw all day long;  
For sideways would she lean, and sing  
A faery's song.

20

## VI

I made a garland for her head,  
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;  
She looked at me as she did love,  
And made sweet moan.

## VII

She found me roots of relish sweet,  
And honey wild, and manna dew;  
And sure in language strange she said,  
“I love thee true.”

## VIII

She took me to her elfin grot,  
And there she gazed and sighèd deep,  
And there I shut her wild sad eyes —  
So kissed to sleep.

30

## IX

And there we slumbered on the moss,  
    And there I dreamed, ah woe betide,  
The latest dream I ever dreamed  
    On the cold hill side.

## X

I saw pale kings, and princes too,  
    Pale warriors, death-pale were they all ;  
Who cried — “ La Belle Dame sans Merci  
    Hath thee in thrall ! ”

40

## XI

I saw their starved lips in the gloom  
    With horrid warning gapèd wide,  
And I awoke, and found me here  
    On the cold hill side.

## XII

And this is why I sojourn here  
    Alone and palely loitering,  
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,  
    And no birds sing.

## SOLITUDE

O SOLITUDE! if I must with thee dwell,  
Let it not be among the jumbled heap  
Of murky buildings; climb with me to the steep,—  
Nature's observatory — whence the dell,  
Its flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell,  
May seem a span; let me thy vigils keep  
'Mongst boughs pavilioned, where the deer's swift  
leap  
Startles the wild bee from the fox-glove bell.  
But though I'll gladly trace these scenes with thee,  
Yet the sweet converse of an innocent mind,      10  
Whose words are images of thoughts refined,  
Is my soul's pleasure; and it sure must be  
Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,  
When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S  
HOMER

MUCH have I traveled in the realms of gold,  
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;  
Round many western islands have I been  
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.  
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told

That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne ;  
 Yet did I never breathe its pure serene  
 Till I heard °Chapman speak out loud and bold :  
 Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
     When a new planet swims into his ken ;      10  
 Or like stout °Cortez when with eagle eyes  
     He stared at the Pacific — and all his men  
 Looked at each other with a wild surmise —  
     Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

## ON THE SEA

It keeps eternal whisperings around  
 Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell  
 Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the spell  
 Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.  
 Often 'tis in such gentle temper found,  
     That scarcely will the very smallest shell  
     Be moved for days from whence it sometime fell,  
 When last the winds of heaven were unbound.  
 Oh ye ! who have your eye-balls vexed and tired,  
     Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea ;      10  
     Oh ye ! whose ears are dinned with uproar rude,  
     Or fed too much with cloying melody, —  
     Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth, and brood  
 Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quired !

## TWO SONNETS ON FAME

## I

FAME, like a wayward girl, will still be coy  
To those who woo her with too slavish knees,  
But makes surrender to some thoughtless boy,  
And dotes the more upon a heart at ease ;  
She is a Gipsy, will not speak to those  
Who have not learnt to be content without her ;  
A Jilt, whose ear was never whispered close,  
Who thinks they scandal her who talk about  
her ;  
A very Gipsy is she, Nilus-born,  
Sister-in-law to jealous Potiphar ; 10  
Ye love-sick Bards, repay her scorn for scorn,  
Ye Artists lovelorn, madmen that ye are !  
Make your best bow to her and bid adieu,  
Then, if she likes it, she will follow you.

## II

“ You cannot eat your cake and have it too.” — *Proverb.*

How fevered is the man, who cannot look  
Upon his mortal days with temperate blood,  
Who vexes all the leaves of his life’s book,

And robs his fair name of its maidenhood ;  
 It is as if the rose should pluck herself,  
 Or the ripe plum finger its misty bloom,  
 As if a Naiad, like a meddling elf,  
 Should darken her pure grot with muddy gloom.  
 But the rose leaves herself upon the brier,  
 For winds to kiss and grateful bees to feed,  
 And the ripe plum still wears its dim attire,  
 The undisturbèd lake has crystal space,  
 Why then should man, teasing the world for grace,  
 Spoil his salvation for a fierce miscreed ?

20

## SONNET TO SLEEP

O soft embalmer of the still midnight,  
 Shutting with careful fingers and benign,  
 Our gloom-pleased eyes, embowered from the light,  
 Enshaded in forgetfulness divine :  
 O soothest Sleep ! if so it please thee, close,  
 In midst of this thine hymn, my willing eyes,  
 Or wait the amen, ere thy poppy throws  
 Around my bed its lulling charities ;  
 Then save me, or the passèd day will shine  
 Upon my pillow, breeding many woes,—

10

Save me from curious conscience, that still lords

Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a mole;  
Turn the key deftly in the oilèd wards,  
And seal the hushèd casket of my soul.

## SONNET TO HOMER

STANDING aloof in <sup>o</sup>giant ignorance,  
Of thee I hear and of the Cyclades,  
As one who sits ashore and longs perchance  
To visit Dolphin-coral in deep seas.  
So thou wast blind ; — but then the veil was rent,  
For Jove uncurtained Heaven to let thee live,  
And Neptune made for thee a spumy tent,  
And Pan made sing for thee his forest-hive.  
Aye, on the shores of darkness there is light,  
And precipices show untrodden green,      10  
There is a <sup>o</sup>budding Morrow in midnight,  
There is a triple sight in blindness keen ;  
Such seeing hadst thou, as it once befel  
To Dian, Queen of Earth, and Heaven, and Hell.

## OPENING LINES OF ENDYMION

## BOOK I

A THING of beauty is a joy forever :  
Its loveliness increases ; it will never  
Pass into nothingness ; but still will keep  
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.  
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing  
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,  
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth  
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,  
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways      10  
Made for our searching : yes, in spite of all,  
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall  
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,  
Trees old, and young; sprouting a shady boon  
For simple sheep ; and such are daffodils  
With the green world they live in ; and clear rills  
That for themselves a cooling covert make  
'Gainst the hot season ; the mid forest brake,  
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms :  
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms      20

We have imagined for the mighty dead;  
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:  
An endless fountain of immortal drink,  
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences  
For one short hour; no, even as the trees  
That whisper round a temple become soon  
Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,  
The passion poesy, glories infinite,  
Haunt us till they become a cheering light      30  
Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,  
That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'ercast,  
They always must be with us, or we die.

## POEM

“Places of nestling green for Poets made.”

—STORY OF RIMINI.

I stood tip-toe upon a little hill,  
The air was cooling, and so very still,  
That the sweet buds which with a modest pride  
Pull droopingly, in slanting curve aside,  
Their scantily leaved, and finely tapering stems,  
Had not yet lost those starry diadems  
Caught from the early sobbing of the morn.  
  
The clouds were pure and white as flocks new shorn,  
And fresh from the clear brook; sweetly they slept  
On the blue fields of heaven, and then there crept      10  
A little noiseless noise among the leaves,  
Born of the very sigh that silence heaves:  
For not the faintest motion could be seen  
Of all the shades that slanted o'er the green.  
There was wide 'wand'ring for the greediest eye,  
To peer about upon variety;  
Far round the horizon's crystal air to skim,  
And trace the dwindled edgings of its <sup>o</sup>brim;

To picture out the quaint, and curious bending  
Of a fresh woodland alley, never ending ;                   20  
Or by the bowery clefts, and leafy shelves,  
Guess where the 'jaunty streams refresh themselves.  
I gazed awhile, and felt as light, and free  
As though the fanning wings of Mercury  
Had played upon my heels : I was light-hearted,  
And many pleasures to my vision started ;  
So I straightway began to pluck a posy  
Of luxuries bright, milky, soft, and rosy.

A bush of May flowers with the °bees about them ;  
Ah, sure no tasteful nook would be without them ;           30  
And let a lush laburnum oversweep them,  
And let long grass grow round the roots to keep them  
Moist, cool, and green ; and shade the violets,  
That they may bind the moss in leafy nets.

A filbert hedge with wild brier overtwined,  
And clumps of woodbine taking the soft wind  
Upon their summer thrones ; there too should be  
The frequent °chequer of a youngling tree,  
That with a score of light green brethren shoots  
From the quaint mossiness of aged roots :                   40  
Round which is heard a spring-head of clear waters  
Babbling so wildly of its lovely daughters

The spreading blue bells : it may haply mourn  
That such fair clusters should be rudely torn  
From their fresh beds, and scattered thoughtlessly  
By infant hands, left on the path to die.

Open afresh your round of starry folds,  
Ye ardent marigolds !

Dry up the moisture from your golden lids,  
For great Apollo bids

That in these days your praises should be sung  
On many harps, which he has lately strung ;  
And when again your dewiness he kisses,  
Tell him, I have you in my world of blisses :  
So haply when I rove in some far vale,  
His mighty voice may come upon the gale.

Here are sweet peas, on tip-toe for a flight :  
With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate white,  
And taper fingers catching at all things,  
To bind them all about with tiny rings.

Linger awhile upon some bending planks  
That lean against a streamlet's rushy banks,  
And watch intently Nature's gentle doings :  
They will be found softer than ring-dove's cooings.  
How silent comes the water round that bend ;

Not the minutest whisper does it send  
To the o'erhanging sallows: blades of grass  
Slowly across the chequered shadows pass.  
Why, you might read two sonnets, ere they reach  
To where the hurrying freshnesses aye preach      70  
A natural sermon o'er their pebbly beds;  
Where swarms of minnows show their little heads,  
Staying their °wavy bodies 'gainst the streams,  
To taste the luxury of sunny beams  
Tempered with coolness. How they ever wrestle  
With their own sweet delight, and ever nestle  
Their silver bellies on the pebbly sand.  
If you but scantily hold out the hand,  
That very instant not one will remain;  
But turn your eye, and they are there again.      80  
The ripples seem right glad to reach those cresses,  
And cool themselves among the em'rald tresses;  
The while they cool themselves, they freshness give,  
And moisture, that the bowery green may live:  
So keeping up an interchange of favors,  
Like good men in the truth of their behaviors.  
Sometimes goldfinches one by one will drop  
From low hung branches; little space they stop;  
But sip, and twitter, and their feathers sleek;  
Then off at once, as in a wanton freak:      90

Or perhaps, to show their black, and golden wings,  
Pausing upon their <sup>°</sup>yellow flutterings.  
Were I in such a place, I sure should pray  
That naught less sweet, might call my thoughts away,  
Than the soft rustle of a maiden's gown  
Fanning away the dandelion's down ;  
Than the light music of her nimble toes  
Patting against the sorrel as she goes.  
How she would start, and blush, thus to be caught  
Playing in all her innocence of thought.

100

O, let me lead her gently o'er the brook,  
Watch her half-smiling lips, and downward look ;  
O, let me for one moment touch her wrist ;  
Let me one moment to her breathing list ;  
And as she leaves me may she often turn  
Her fair eyes looking through her locks auburn.  
What next ? A tuft of evening primroses,  
O'er which the mind may hover till it dozes ;  
O'er which it well might take a pleasant sleep,  
But that 'tis ever startled by the leap

110

Of buds into ripe flowers ; or by the flitting  
Of diverse moths, that aye their rest are quitting ;  
Or by the moon lifting her silver rim  
Above a cloud, and with a gradual swim  
Coming into the blue with all her light.

O, Maker of sweet poets, dear delight  
Of this fair world, and all its gentle livers ;  
Spangler of clouds, halo of crystal rivers,  
Mingler with leaves, and dew and tumbling streams,  
Closer of lovely eyes to lovely dreams,      120  
Lover of loneliness, and wandering,  
Of upcast eye, and tender pondering !  
Thee must I praise above all other glories  
That smile us on to tell delightful stories.  
For what has made the sage or poet write  
But the fair paradise of Nature's light ?  
In the calm grandeur of a sober line,  
We see the waving of the mountain pine ;  
And when a tale is beautifully <sup>°</sup>staid,  
We feel the safety of a hawthorn glade :      130  
When it is moving on luxurious wings,  
The soul is lost in pleasant smotherings :  
Fair dewy roses brush against our faces,  
And flowering laurels spring from diamond vases ;  
O'erhead we see the jasmine and sweet brier,  
And bloomy grapes laughing from green attire :  
While at our feet, the voice of crystal bubbles  
Charms us at once away from all our troubles :  
So that we feel uplifted from the world,      139  
Walking upon the white clouds wreathed and curled.

So felt he, who first told how Psyche went  
 On the smooth wind to realms of wonderment ;  
 What Psyche felt, and Love, when their full lips  
 First touched ; what amorous, and fondling nips  
 They gave each other's cheeks ; with all their sighs,  
 And how they kissed each other's tremulous eyes :  
 Their woes gone by, and both to heaven upflown,  
 To bow for gratitude before Jove's throne.

So did he feel, who pulled the boughs aside,  
 That we might look into a forest wide,      150  
 To catch a glimpse of Fauns, and Dryades  
 Coming with softest rustle through the trees ;  
 And garlands woven of flowers wild, and sweet,  
 Upheld on ivory wrists, or sporting feet ;  
 Telling us how fair, trembling Syrinx fled  
 Arcadian Pan, with such a fearful dread.  
 Poor nymph,— poor Pan,— how he did weep to find  
 Naught but a lovely sighing of the wind  
 Along the reedy stream ; a half-heard strain,  
 Full of sweet desolation — balmy pain.      160

What first inspired a bard of old to sing  
 Narcissus °pining o'er the untainted spring ?  
 In some delicious ramble, he had found  
 A little space, with boughs all woven round ;

And in the midst of all, a clearer pool  
Than e'er reflected in its pleasant cool,  
The blue sky here, and there, serenely peeping  
Through tendril wreaths fantastically creeping.  
And on the bank a lonely flower he spied,  
A meek and forlorn flower, with naught of pride, 170  
Drooping its beauty o'er the watery clearness,  
To woo its own sad image into nearness :  
Deaf to light Zephyrus it would not move ;  
But still would seem to droop, to pine, to love.  
So while the poet stood in this sweet spot,  
Some fainter gleamings o'er his fancy shot ;  
Nor was it long ere he had told the tale  
Of young Narcissus, and sad Echo's bale.

Where had he been, from whose warm head out-flew  
That sweetest of all songs, that ever new, 180  
That aye refreshing, pure deliciousness,  
Coming ever to bless  
The wanderer by moonlight ? to him bringing  
Shapes from the invisible world, unearthly singing  
From out the middle air, from flowery nests,  
And from the pillowy silkiness that rests  
Full in the speculation of the stars.  
Ah ! surely he had burst our mortal bars ;

Into some wond'rous region he had gone,  
To search for thee, divine Endymion !

190

He was a Poet, sure a lover too,  
Who stood on Latmus' top, what time there blew  
Soft breezes from the myrtle vale below ;  
And brought in faintness solemn, sweet, and slow  
A hymn from Dian's temple ; while upswelling,  
The incense went to her own starry dwelling.  
But though her face was clear as infant's eyes,  
Though she stood smiling o'er the sacrifice,  
The Poet wept at her so piteous fate,  
Wept that such beauty should be desolate :  
So in fine wrath some golden sounds he won,  
And gave meek Cynthia her Endymion.

200

Queen of the wide air ; thou most lovely queen  
Of all the brightness that mine eyes have seen !  
As thou exceedest all things in thy shine,  
So every tale, does this sweet tale of thine.  
O, for three words of honey, that I might  
Tell but one wonder of thy bridal night !  
Where distant ships do seem to show their keels  
Phœbus awhile delayed his mighty wheels,

210

And turned to smile upon thy bashful eyes,  
Ere he his unseen pomp would solemnize.  
The evening weather was so bright, and clear,  
That men of health were of unusual cheer;  
Stepping like Homer at the trumpet's call,  
Or young Apollo on the pedestal:  
The breezes were ethereal, and pure,  
And crept through half-closed lattices to cure  
The languid sick; it cooled their fevered sleep,  
And soothed them into slumbers full and deep.      220  
Soon they awoke clear eyed: nor burnt with thirsting,  
Nor with hot fingers, nor with temples bursting:  
And springing up, they met the wond'ring sight  
Of their dear friends, nigh foolish with delight;  
Young men and maidens at each other gazed  
With hands held back, and motionless, amazed  
To see the brightness in each other's eyes;  
And so they stood, filled with a sweet surprise,  
Until their tongues were loosed in poesy.  
Therefore no lover did of anguish die:      230  
But the soft numbers, in that moment spoken,  
Made silken ties, that never may be broken.

## ISABELLA;

OR,

## THE POT OF BASIL

## I

FAIR Isabel, poor simple Isabel!

Lorenzo, a young palmer in Love's eye!  
 They could not in the self-same mansion dwell  
 Without some stir of heart, some malady;  
 They could not sit at meals but feel how well  
 It soothed each to be the other by;  
 They could not, sure, beneath the same roof sleep,  
 But to each other dream, and nightly weep.

## II

With every morn their love grew tenderer,

With every eve deeper and tenderer still;  
 He might not in house, field, or garden stir,  
 But her full shape would all his seeing fill;  
 And his continual voice was pleasanter  
 To her than noise of trees or hidden rill;  
 Her lute-string gave an echo of his name,  
 She spoilt her half-done broidery with the same.

## III

He knew whose gentle hand was at the latch,  
 Before the door had given her to his eyes;  
 And from her chamber-window he would catch  
 Her beauty farther than the falcon spies;      20  
 And constant as her vespers would he watch,  
 Because her face was turned to the same skies;  
 And with sick longing all the night outwear,  
 To hear her morning-step upon the stair.

## IV

A whole long month of May in this sad plight  
 Made their cheeks paler by the break of June:  
 "To-morrow will I bow to my delight,  
 To-morrow will I ask my lady's boon." —  
 "O, may I never see another night,  
 Lorenzo, if thy lips breathe not love's tune." —      30  
 So spake they to their pillows; but, alas,  
 Honeyless days and days did he let pass;

## V

Until sweet Isabella's untouched cheek  
 Fell sick within the rose's just domain,  
 Fell thin as a young mother's, who doth seek  
 By every lull to cool her infant's pain:

“ How ill she is,” said he, “ I may not speak,  
 And yet I will, and tell my love all plain :  
 If looks speak love-laws, I will drink her tears,  
 And at the least ’twill startle off her cares.”

40

## VI

So said he one fair morning, and all day  
 His heart beat awfully against his side ;  
 And to his heart he inwardly did pray  
 For power to speak ; but still the ruddy tide  
 Stifled his voice, and pulsed resolve away —  
 Fevered his high conceit of such a bride.  
 Yet brought him to the meekness of a child :  
 Alas ! when passion is both meek and wild !

## VII

So once more he had waked and anguished .  
 A dreary night of love and misery,  
 If Isabel’s quick eye had not been wed  
 To every symbol on his forehead high ;  
 She saw it waxing very pale and dead,  
 And straight all flushed ; so, lisped tenderly,  
 “ Lorenzo ! ” — here she ceased her timid quest,  
 But in her tone and look he read the rest.

50

## VIII

“O Isabella, I can half perceive  
 That I may speak my grief into thine ear;  
 If thou didst ever anything believe,  
 Believe how I love thee, believe how near      64  
 My soul is to its doom: I would not grieve  
 Thy hand by unwelcome pressing, would not fear  
 Thine eyes by gazing; but I cannot live  
 Another night, and not my passion shrive.

## IX

“Love! thou art leading me from wintry cold,  
 Lady! thou leadest me to summer clime,  
 And I must taste the blossoms that unfold  
 In its ripe warmth this gracious morning time.”  
 So said, his erewhile timid lips grew bold,  
 And poesied with hers in dewy rhyme:      7c  
 Great bliss was with them, and great happiness  
 Grew, like a lusty flower in June’s caress.

## X

Parting they seemed to tread upon the air,  
 Twin roses by the zephyr blown apart  
 Only to meet again more close, and share  
 The inward fragrance of each other’s heart.

She, to her chamber gone, a ditty fair

Sang, of delicious love and honeyed dart;  
He with light steps went up a western hill,  
And bade the sun farewell, and joyed his fill.

80

## XI

All close they meet again, before the dusk

Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,  
All close they met, all eves, before the dusk

Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,  
Close in a bower of hyacinth and musk,

Unknown of any, free from whispering tale.  
Ah! better had it been forever so,  
Than idle ears should pleasure in their woe.

## XII

Were they unhappy then? — it cannot be —

Too many tears for lovers have been shed,  
Too many sighs give we to them in fee,

Too much of pity after they are dead,  
Too many doleful stories do we see,

Whose matter in bright gold were best be read;  
Except in such a page where Theseus' spouse  
Over the pathless waves towards him bows.

90

## XIII

But, for the general award of love,  
 The little sweet doth kill much bitterness ;  
 Though Dido silent is in under-grove,  
 And Isabella's was a great distress,  
 Though young Lorenzo in warm Indian clove  
     Was not embalmed, this truth is not the less —  
 Even bees, the little almsmen of spring-bowers,  
 Know there is richest juice in poison-flowers.

100

## XIV

With her two brothers this fair lady dwelt,  
 Enrichèd from ancestral merchandise,  
 And for them many a weary hand did swelt  
     In torchèd mines and noisy factories,  
 And many once proud-quivered loins did melt  
     In blood from stinging whip ; — with hollow eyes 110  
 Many all day in dazzling river stood,  
 To take the rich-ored driftings of the flood.

## XV

For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,  
 And went all naked to the hungry shark ;  
 For them his ears gushed blood ; for them in death  
     The seal on the cold ice with piteous bark

Lay full of darts ; for them alone did seethe  
 A thousand men in troubles wide and dark :  
 Half-ignorant, they turned an easy wheel,  
 That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel.      120

## xvi

Why were they proud ? Because their marble founts  
 Gushed with more pride than do a wretch's tears ? —  
 Why were they proud ? Because fair orange-mounts  
 Were of more soft assent than lazarus stairs ? —  
 Why were they proud ? Because red-lined accounts  
 Were richer than the songs of Grecian years ? —  
 Why were they proud ? again we ask aloud,  
 Why in the name of Glory were they proud ?

## xvii

Yet were these Florentines as self-retired  
 In hungry pride and gainful cowardice,  
 As two close Hebrews in that land inspired,      130  
 Paled in and vineyarded from beggar-spies ;  
 The hawks of ship-mast forests — the untired  
 And panniered mules for ducats and old lies —  
 Quick cat's-paws on the generous stray-away, —  
 Great wits in Spanish, Tuscan, and Malay.

## XVIII

How was it these same ledger-men could spy  
 Fair Isabella in her downy nest?  
 How could they find out in Lorenzo's eye  
 A straying from his toil? Hot Egypt's pest      140  
 Into their vision covetous and sly!  
 How could these money-bags see east and west? —  
 Yet so they did — and every dealer fair  
 Must see behind, as doth the hunted hare.

## XIX

O eloquent and famed Boccaccio!  
 Of thee we now should ask forgiving boon,  
 And of thy spicy myrtles as they blow,  
 And of thy roses amorous of the moon,  
 And of thy lilies, that do paler grow  
 Now they can no more hear thy ghittern's tune,    150  
 For venturing syllables that ill beseem  
 The quiet glooms of such a piteous theme.

## XX

Grant thou a pardon here, and then the tale  
 Shall move on soberly, as it is meet;  
 There is no other crime, no mad assail  
 To make old prose in modern rhyme more sweet:

But it is done — succeed the verse or fail —

To honor thee, and thy gone spirit greet;  
To steady thee as a verse in English tongue,  
An echo of thee in the north-wind sung.

160

## XXI

These brethren having found by many signs

What love Lorenzo for their sister had,  
And how she loved him too, each unconfin'd  
His bitter thoughts to other, well-nigh mad  
That he, the servant of their trade designs,  
Should in their sister's love be blithe and glad,  
When 'twas their plan to coax her by degrees  
To some high noble and his olive-trees.

## XXII

And many a jealous conference had they,

And many times they bit their lips alone,  
Before they fixed upon a surest way

170

To make the youngster for his crime atone;  
And at the last, these men of cruel clay

Cut Mercy with a sharp knife to the bone;  
For they resolvèd in some forest dim  
To kill Lorenzo, and there bury him.

## XXIII

So on a pleasant morning, as he leant  
    Into the sun-rise, o'er the balustrade  
Of the garden-terrace, towards him they bent  
    Their footing through the dews; and to him said, 180  
“ You seem there in the quiet of content,  
    Lorenzo, and we are most loath to invade  
Calm speculation; but if you are wise,  
    Bestride your steed while cold is in the skies.

## XXIV

To-day we purpose, aye, this hour we mount  
    To spur three leagues towards the Apennine;  
Come down, we pray thee, ere the hot sun count  
    His dewy rosary on the eglantine.”  
Lorenzo, courteously as he was wont,  
    Bowed a fair greeting to these serpents’ whine; 190  
And went in haste, to get in readiness,  
    With belt, and spur, and bracing huntsman’s dress.

## XXV

And as he to the court-yard passed along,  
    Each third step did he pause, and listened oft  
If he could hear his lady’s matin-song,  
    Or the light whisper of her footstep soft;

And as he thus over his passion hung,  
 He heard a laugh full musical aloft ;  
 When, looking up, he saw her features bright  
 Smile through an in-door lattice, all delight.

200

## XXVI

“ Love, Isabel ! ” said he, “ I was in pain  
 Lest I should miss to bid thee a good Morrow :  
 Ah ! what if I should lose thee, when so fain  
 I am to stifle all the heavy sorrow  
 Of a poor three hours’ absence ? but we’ll gain  
 Out of the amorous dark what day doth borrow.  
 Good-by ! I’ll soon be back.” — “ Good-by ! ” said  
 she : —  
 And as he went she chanted merrily.

## XXVII

So the two brothers and their °murdered man  
 Rode past fair Florence, to where Arno’s stream 210  
 Gurgles through straitened banks, and still doth fan  
 Itself with dancing bulrush, and the bream  
 Keeps head against the freshets. Sick and wan  
 The brothers’ faces in the ford did seem,  
 Lorenzo’s flush with love. — They passed the water  
 Into a forest quiet for the slaughter.

## XXVIII

There was Lorenzo slain and buried in,  
There in that forest did his great love cease ;  
Ah ! when a soul doth thus its freedom win,  
It aches in loneliness — is ill at peace 220  
As the break-covert blood-hounds of such sin ;  
They dipped their swords in the water, and did tease  
Their horses homeward, with convulsèd spur,  
Each richer by his being a murderer.

## XXIX

They told their sister how, with sudden speed,  
Lorenzo had ta'en ship for foreign lands,  
Because of some great urgency and need  
In their affairs, requiring trusty hands.  
Poor Girl ! put on thy stifling widow's weed,  
And 'scape at once from Hope's accursèd bands ; 230  
To-day thou wilt not see him, nor to-morrow,  
And the next day will be a day of sorrow.

## XXX

She weeps alone for pleasures not to be ;  
Sorely she wept until the night came on,  
And then, instead of love, O misery !  
She brooded o'er the luxury alone :

His image in the dusk she seemed to see,  
 And to the silence made a gentle moan,  
 Spreading her perfect arms upon the air,      239  
 And on her couch low murmuring, "Where? O where?"

## XXXI

But Selfishness, Love's cousin, held not long  
 Its fiery vigil in her single breast;  
 She fretted for the golden hour, and hung  
 Upon the time with feverish unrest—  
 Not long—for soon into her heart a throng  
 Of higher occupants, a richer zest,  
 Came tragic; passion not to be subdued,  
 And sorrow for her love in travels rude.

## XXXII

In the mid days of autumn, on their eves  
 The breath of Winter comes from far away,      250  
 And the sick west continually bereaves  
 Of some gold tinge, and plays a roundelay  
 Of death among the bushes and the leaves,  
 To make all bare before he dares to stray  
 From his north cavern. So sweet Isabel  
 By gradual decay from beauty fell,

## XXXIII

Because Lorenzo came not. Oftentimes  
She asked her brothers, with an eye all pale,  
Striving to be itself, what dungeon climes  
Could keep him off so long? They spake a tale 260  
Time after time, to quiet her. Their crimes  
Came on them, like a smoke from "Hinnom's vale;  
And every night in dreams they groaned aloud,  
To see their sister in her snowy shroud.

## XXXIV

And she had died in drowsy ignorance,  
But for a thing more deadly dark than all;  
It came like a fierce potion, drunk by chance,  
Which saves a sick man from the feathered pall  
For some few gasping moments; like a lance,  
Waking an Indian from his cloudy hall 270  
With cruel pierce, and bringing him again  
Sense of the gnawing fire at heart and brain.

## XXXV

It was a vision.—In the drowsy gloom,  
The dull of midnight, at her couch's foot  
Lorenzo stood, and wept: the forest tomb  
Had marred his glossy hair which once could shoot

Lustre into the sun, and put cold doom  
 Upon his lips, and taken the soft lute  
 From his lorn voice, and past his loamèd ears  
 Had made a miry channel for his tears.

280

## XXXVI

Strange sound it was, when the pale shadow spake;  
 For there was striving, in its piteous tongue,  
 To speak as when on earth it was awake,  
 And Isabella on its music hung:  
 Languor there was in it, and tremulous shake,  
 As in a palsied Druid's harp unstrung ;  
 And through it moaned a ghostly under-song,  
 Like hoarse night-gusts sepulchral briers among.

## XXXVII

Its eyes, though wild, were still all dewy bright  
 With love, and kept all phantom fear aloof  
 From the poor girl by magic of their light,  
 The while it did unthread the horrid woof  
 Of the late darkened time,— the murderous spite  
 Of pride and avarice,— the dark pine roof  
 In the forest,— and the sodden turfèd dell,  
 Where, without any word, from stabs he fell.

290

## XXXVIII

Saying moreover, “Isabel, my sweet!  
Red whortle-berries droop above my head,  
And a large flint-stone weighs upon my feet;  
Around me beeches and high chestnuts shed  
Their leaves and prickly nuts; a sheep-fold bleat  
Comes from beyond the river to my bed:  
Go, shed one tear upon my heather-bloom,  
And it shall comfort me within the tomb.

3cc

## XXXIX

“I am a shadow now, alas! alas!  
Upon the skirts of human-nature dwelling  
Alone: I chant alone the holy mass,  
While little sounds of life are round me knelling,  
And glossy bees at noon do fieldward pass,  
And many a chapel bell the hour is telling,  
Paining me through: those sounds grow strange to me,  
And thou art distant in Humanity.

31c

## XL

“I know what was, I feel full well what is,  
And I should rage, if spirits could go mad;  
Though I forget the taste of earthly bliss,  
That paleness warms my grave, as though I had

A Seraph chosen from the bright abyss  
 To be my spouse : thy paleness makes me glad ;  
 Thy beauty grows upon me, and I feel  
 A greater love through all my essence steal."      320

## XLII

The Spirit mourned "Adieu!" — dissolved, and left  
 The atom darkness in a slow turmoi ;  
 As when of healthful midnight sleep bereft,  
 Thinking on rugged hours and fruitless toil,  
 We put our eyes into a pillowy cleft,  
 And see the spangly gloom froth up and boil :  
 It made sad Isabella's eyelids ache,  
 And in the dawn she started up awake.

## XLIII

" Ha ! ha ! " said she, " I knew not this hard life,  
 I thought the worst was simple misery ;      33c  
 I thought some Fate with pleasure or with strife  
 Portioned us — happy days, or else to die ;  
 But there is crime — a brother's bloody knife !  
 Sweet spirit, thou hast schooled my infancy :  
 I'll visit thee for this, and kiss thine eyes,  
 And greet thee morn and even in the skies."

## XLIII

When the full morning came, she had devised  
 How she might secret to the forest hie ;  
 How she might find the clay, so dearly prized,  
 And sing to it one latest lullaby ;  
 How her short absence might be unsurmised,  
 While she the inmost of the dream would try.  
 Resolved, she took with her an aged nurse,  
 And went into that dismal forest-hearse.

34°

## XLIV

See, as they creep along the river side,  
 How she doth whisper to that aged Dame,  
 And, after looking round that campaign wide,  
 Shows her a knife. — “ What feverish hectic flame  
 Burns in thee, child ? — What good can thee betide,  
 That thou shouldst smile again ? ” — The evening  
 came,  
 And they had found Lorenzo’s earthy bed ;  
 The flint was there, the berries at his head.

35°

## XLV

Who hath not loitered in a green church-yard,  
 And let his spirit, like a demon-mole,  
 Work through the clayey soil and gravel hard,

To see scull, coffined bones, and funeral stole ;  
 Pitying each form that hungry Death hath marred,  
     And filling it once more with human soul ?  
 Ah ! this is holiday to what was felt  
 When Isabella by Lorenzo knelt.

360

## XLVI

She gazed into the fresh-thrown mould, as though  
     One glance did fully all its secrets tell ;  
 Clearly she saw, as other eyes would know  
     Pale limbs at bottom of a crystal well ;  
 Upon the murderous spot she seemed to grow,  
     Like to a native lily of the dell :  
 Then with her knife, all sudden, she began  
 To dig more fervently than misers can.

## XLVII

Soon she turned up a soiled glove, whereon  
     Her silk had played in purple phantasies,  
 She kissed it with a lip more chill than stone,  
     And put it in her bosom, where it dries  
 And freezes utterly unto the bone  
     Those dainties made to still an infant's cries :  
 Then 'gan she work again ; nor stayed her care,  
 But to throw back at times her veiling hair.

370

## XLVIII

That old nurse stood beside her wondering,  
 Until her heart felt pity to the core  
 At sight of such a dismal laboring,  
 And so she kneelèd, with her locks all hoar,      380  
 And put her lean hands to the horrid thing :  
 Three hours they labored at this travail sore :  
 At last they felt the kernel of the grave,  
 And Isabella did not stamp and rave.

## XLIX

Ah ! wherefore all this wormy circumstance ?  
 Why linger at the yawning tomb so long ?  
 O for the gentleness of old Romance,  
 The simple plaining of a minstrel's song !  
 Fair reader, at the old tale take a glance,  
 For here, in truth, it doth not well belong      390  
 To speak : — O turn thee to the very tale,  
 And taste the music of that vision pale.

## L

With duller steel than the ° Persèan sword  
 They cut away no formless monster's head,  
 But one, whose gentleness did well accord  
 With death, as life. The ancient harps have said,

Love never dies, but lives, immortal Lord :

If Love impersonate was ever dead,  
Pale Isabella kissed it, and low moaned.  
'Twas love ; cold,—dead indeed, but not dethroned.

399

## LI

In anxious secrecy they took it home,

And then the prize was all for Isabel :  
She calmed its wild hair with a golden comb,

And all around each eye's sepulchral cell  
Pointed each fringed lash ; the smearèd loam

With tears, as chilly as a dripping well,  
She drenched away :—and still she combed, and kept  
Sighing all day — and still she kissed and wept.

## LII

Then in a silken scarf, — sweet with the dews

Of precious flowers plucked in Araby,  
And divine liquids come with odorous ooze

410

Through the cold serpent-pipe refreshfully,—  
She wrapped it up ; and for its tomb did choose  
A garden-pot, wherein she laid it by,  
And covered it with mould, and o'er it set  
Sweet Basil, which her tears kept ever wet.

## LIII

And she forgot the stars, the moon, and sun,

    And she forgot the blue above the trees,

And she forgot the dells where waters run,

    And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze;

420

She had no knowledge when the day was done,

    And the new morn she saw not: but in peace

Hung over her sweet Basil evermore,

And moistened it with tears unto the core.

## LIV

And so she ever fed it with thin tears,

    Whence thick, and green, and beautiful it grew,

So that it smelt more balmy than its peers

    Of Basil-tufts in Florence; for it drew

Nurture besides, and life, from human fears,

    From the fast mouldering head there shut from

view:

430

So that the jewel, safely casketed,

Came forth, and in perfumèd leaflets spread.

## LV

O Melancholy, linger here awhile!

    O Music, Music, breathe despondingly.

O Echo, Echo, from some sombre isle,

Unknown, Lethean, sigh to us — O sigh !  
 Spirits in grief, lift up your heads, and smile ;

Lift up your heads, sweet Spirits, heavily,  
 And make a pale light in your cypress glooms,  
 Tinting with silver wan your marble tombs.

440

## LVI

Moan hither, all ye syllables of woe,  
 From the deep throat of sad °Melpomene !  
 Through bronzèd lyre in tragic order go,  
 And touch the strings into a mystery ;  
 Sound mournfully upon the winds and low ;  
 For simple Isabel is soon to be  
 Among the dead : She withers, like a palm  
 Cut by an Indian for its juicy balm.

## LVII

O leave the palm to wither by itself ;  
 Let not quick Winter chill its dying hour ! —

450

It may not be — those °Baälites of pelf,  
 Her brethren, noted the continual shower  
 From her dead eyes ; and many a curious elf,  
 Among her kindred, wondered that such dower  
 Of youth and beauty should be thrown aside  
 By one marked out to be a Noble's bride.

## LVIII

And, furthermore, her brethren wondered much

Why she sat drooping by the Basil green,

And why it flourished, as by magic touch ;

450

Greatly they wondered what the thing might mean :

They could not surely give belief, that such

A very nothing would have power to wean

Her from her own fair youth, and pleasures gay,

And even remembrance of her love's delay.

## LIX

Therefore they watched a time when they might sift

This hidden whim; and long they watched in vain;

For seldom did she go to chapel-shrift,

And seldom felt she any hunger-pain ;

And when she left, she hurried back, as swift

As bird on wing to breast its eggs again ;

470

And, patient as a hen-bird, sat her there

Beside her Basil, weeping through her hair.

## LX

Yet they contrived to steal the Basil-pot,

And to examine it in secret place :

The thing was vile with green and livid spot,

And yet they knew it was Lorenzo's face :

The guerdon of their murder they had got,  
 And so left Florence in a moment's space,  
 Never to turn again.— Away they went  
 With blood upon their heads to banishment.

480

## LXI

O Melancholy, turn thine eyes away !  
 O Music, Music, breathe despondingly !  
 O Echo, Echo, on some other day,  
     From isles Lethean, sigh to us— O sigh !  
 Spirits of grief, sing not your “ Well-a-way ! ”  
     For Isabel, sweet Isabel, will die ;  
 Will die a death too lone and incomplete,  
 Now they have ta'en away her Basil sweet.

## LXII

Piteous she looked on dead and senseless things,  
     Asking for her lost Basil amorously ;  
 And with melodious chuckle in the strings  
     Of her lorn voice, she oftentimes would cry  
 After the <sup>490</sup>“ Pilgrim in his wanderings,  
     To ask him where her Basil was ; and why  
 ”Twas hid from her : “ For cruel 'tis,” said she,  
 “ To steal my Basil-pot away from me.”

## LXIII

And so she pined, and so she died forlorn,  
Imploring for her Basil to the last.

No heart was there in Florence but did mourn  
In pity of her love, so overcast.

500

And a sad ditty of this story borne  
From mouth to mouth through all the country  
passed:

Still is the burthen sung — “O cruelty,  
To steal my Basil-pot away from me !”

## THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

## I

°ST. AGNES' Eve — Ah, bitter chill it was !  
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold ;  
The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass,  
And silent was the flock in woolly fold :  
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told  
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,  
Like pious incense from a censer old,  
Seemed taking flight for heaven, without a death,  
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he  
saith.

## II

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man ;      10  
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,  
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,  
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees :  
The sculptured dead, on each side, seem to freeze,  
Emprisoned in black, purgatorial rails :  
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,  
He passeth by ; and his weak spirit fails  
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

## III

Northward he turneth through a little door,  
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue 20  
Flattered to tears this aged man and poor ;  
But no — already had his deathbell rung ;  
The joys of all his life were said and sung ;  
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve ;  
Another way he went, and soon among  
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,  
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

## IV

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft ;  
And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,  
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft, 30  
The silver, "snarling trumpets 'gan to chide :  
The level chambers, ready with their pride,  
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests :  
The carvèd angels, ever eager-eyed,  
Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,  
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on  
their breasts.

## V

At length burst in the argent revelry,  
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,

VI

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,  
Young virgins might have visions of delight,  
And soft adorings from their loves receive  
Upon the honeyed middle of the night,  
If ceremonies due they did aright;      50  
As, supperless to bed they must retire,  
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;  
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require  
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

vii

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline :  
The music, yearning like a God in pain,  
She scarcely heard : her maiden eyes divine,  
Fixed on the floor, saw many a sweeping train  
Pass by — she heeded not at all : in vain

Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier, 60  
And back retired; not cooled by high disdain,  
But she saw not: her heart was otherwhere:  
She sighed for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

## VIII

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,  
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:  
The hallowed hour was near at hand: she sighs  
Amid the timbrels, and the thronged resort  
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;  
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,  
Hoodwinked with fairy fancy; all amort, 7c  
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,  
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

## IX

So, purposing each moment to retire,  
She lingered still. Meantime, across the moors,  
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire  
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,  
Buttressed from moonlight, stands he, and implores  
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,  
But for one moment in the tedious hours,

That he might gaze and worship all unseen;        80  
 Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such  
 things have been.

## x

He ventures in: let no buzzed whisper tell:  
 All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords  
 Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel:  
 For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,  
 Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,  
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl  
 Against his lineage: not one breast affords  
 Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,  
 Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.        90

## xi

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature came,  
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,  
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,  
 Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond  
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland:  
 He startled her; but soon she knew his face,  
 And grasped his fingers in her palsied hand,  
 Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place;  
 They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty  
 race!"

## XII

“Get hence! get hence! there’s dwarfish Hildebrand;

100

He had a fever late, and in the fit

He cursèd thee and thine, both house and land:

Then there’s that old Lord Maurice, not a whit  
More tame for his gray hairs — Alas me! flit!

Flit like a ghost away.” — “Ah, Gossip dear,

We’re safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit,  
And tell me how” — “Good Saints! not here, not

here;

Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy  
bier.”

## XIII

He followed through a lowly archèd way,

Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume,

110

And as she muttered “ Well-a — well-a-day ! ”

He found him in a little moonlight room,

Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.

“Now tell me where is Madeline,” said he,

“O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom

Which none but secret sisterhood may see,

When they St. Agnes’ wool are weaving piously.”

## XIV

“St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes’ Eve —  
 Yet men will murder upon holy days:  
 Thou must hold water in a <sup>°</sup>witch’s sieve,  
 And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,  
 To venture so: it fills me with amaze  
 To see thee, Porphyro! — St. Agnes’ Eve!  
 God’s help! my lady fair the conjuror plays  
 This very night: good angels her deceive!  
 But let me laugh awhile, I’ve mickle time to grieve.”

## XV

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,  
 While Porphyro upon her face doth look,  
 Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone  
 Who keepeth closed a wond’rous riddle-book,  
 As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.  
 But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told  
 His lady’s purpose; and he scarce could brook  
 Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,  
 And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

## XVI

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,  
 Flushing his brow, and in his painèd heart

Made purple riot: then doth he propose  
 A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:  
 “A cruel man and impious thou art:      140  
 Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream  
 Alone with her good angels, far apart  
 From wicked men like thee. Go, go!— I deem  
 Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst  
 seem.”

## XVII

“I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,”  
 Quoth Porphyro: “O may I ne’er find grace  
 When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,  
 If one of her soft ringlets I displace,  
 Or look with ruffian passion in her face:  
 Good Angela, believe me by these tears;      150  
 Or I will, even in a moment’s space,  
 Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen’s ears,  
 And beard them, though they be more fanged than  
 wolves and bears.”

## XVIII

“Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?  
 A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,  
 Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;

Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,  
Were never missed." — Thus plaining, doth she  
bring

A gentler speech from burning Porphyro ;  
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,      160  
That Angela gives promise she will do  
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

## XIX

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,  
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide  
Him in a closet, of such privacy  
That he might see her beauty unespied,  
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,  
While legioned fairies paced the coverlet,  
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.  
Never on such a night have lovers met      170  
Since °Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

## XX

" It shall be as thou wishest," said the dame :  
" All cates and dainties shall be storèd there  
Quickly on this feast-night : by the tambour frame  
Her own lute thou wilt see : no time to spare,  
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare

On such a catering trust my dizzy head.  
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer  
The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,  
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead." 180

## xxi

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.  
The lover's endless minutes slowly passed;  
The dame returned, and whispered in his ear  
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast  
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,  
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain  
The maiden's chamber, silken, hushed, and chaste;  
Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.  
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

## xxii

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade,  
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,  
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmèd maid,  
Rose, like a missioned spirit, unaware:  
With silver taper's light, and pious care,  
She turned, and down the aged gossip led  
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,

Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed ;  
 She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove frayed and fled.

## XXIII

Out went the taper as she hurried in ;  
 Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died : 200  
 She closed the door, she panted, all akin  
 To spirits of the air, and visions wide :  
 No uttered syllable, or, woe betide !  
 But to her heart, her heart was voluble,  
 Paining with eloquence her balmy side ;  
 As though a tongueless nightingale should swell  
 Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

## XXIV

A casement high and triple-arched there was,  
 All garlanded with carven imag'ries  
 Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass, 210  
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device,  
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,  
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings ;  
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,  
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,  
 A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of queens and  
 kings.

## XXV

Full on this easement shone the wintry moon,  
 And threw warm <sup>o</sup>gules on Madeline's fair breast,  
 As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon ;  
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together pressed,    220  
 And on her silver cross soft amethyst,  
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint :  
 She seemed a splendid angel, newly dressed,  
 Save wings, for heaven : — Porphyro grew faint :  
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

## XXVI

Anon his heart revives : her vespers done,  
 Of all its wreathèd pearls her hair she frees ;  
 Unclasps her warmèd jewels one by one ;  
 Loosens her fragrant bodice ; by degrees  
 Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees :    230  
 Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,  
 Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,  
 In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,  
 But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

## XXVII

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,  
 In sort of wakeful swoon, perplexed she lay,

Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppressed  
 Her soothèd limbs, and soul fatigued away;  
 Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;  
 Blissfully havened both from joy and pain;      240  
 Clasped like a missal where swart 'Paynims pray;  
 Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,  
 As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

## XXVIII

Stolen to this paradise, and so entranced,  
 Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,  
 And listened to her breathing, if it chanced  
 To wake into a slumberous tenderness;  
 Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,  
 And breathed himself: then from the closet crept,  
 Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,      250  
 And over the hushed carpet, silent, stepped,  
 And 'tween the curtains peeped, where, lo! — how fast  
 she slept.

## XXIX

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon  
 Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set  
 A table, and, half anguished, threw thereon  
 A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:—

O for some drowsy Morphean amulet !  
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,  
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,  
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone : —      260  
The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

## XXX

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,  
In blanchèd linen, smooth, and lavendered,  
While he from forth the closet brought a heap  
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd ;  
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,  
And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon ;  
Manna and dates, in argosy transferred  
From Fez ; and spicèd dainties, every one,  
From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon.      270

## XXXI

These delicates he heaped with glowing hand  
On golden dishes and in baskets bright  
Of wreathèd silver : sumptuous they stand  
In the retired quiet of the night,  
Filling the chilly room with perfume light. —  
“ And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake !

Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite :  
 Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,  
 Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache."

## XXXII

Thus whispering, his warm, unnervèd arm                    280  
 Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream  
 By the dusk curtains : — 'twas a midnight charm  
 Impossible to melt as icèd stream :  
 The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam ;  
 Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies :  
 It seemed he never, never could redeem  
 From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes ;  
 So mused awhile, entoiled in woofèd phantasies.

## XXXIII

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute, —  
 Tumultuous, — and, in chords that tenderest be,    290  
 He played an ancient ditty, long since mute,  
 In Provence called, "La belle dame sans merci" :  
 Close to her ear touching the melody ; —  
 Wherewith disturbed, she uttered a soft moan.  
 He ceased — she panted quick — and suddenly  
 Her blue affrayèd eyes wide open shone :  
 Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured  
 stone.

## XXXIV

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,  
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:  
There was a painful change, that nigh expelled   300  
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep  
At which fair Madeline began to weep,  
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;  
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;  
Who knelt, with joinèd hands and piteous eye,  
Fearing to move or speak, she looked so dreamingly.

## XXXV

“Ah, Porphyro!” said she, “but even now  
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,  
Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;  
And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear:   310  
How changed thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!  
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,  
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!  
Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,  
For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go.”

## XXXVI

Beyond a mortal man impassioned far  
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,

Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing star  
 Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;  
 Into her dream he melted, as the rose  
320  
 Blendeth its odor with the violet,—  
 Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows  
 Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet  
 Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

## XXXVII

"Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet:  
 "This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"  
 "Tis dark: the icèd gusts still rave and beat:  
 "No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!  
 Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—  
 Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?  
330  
 I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,  
 Though thou forsakest a deceivèd thing—  
 A dove forlorn and lost with sick unprunèd wing."

## XXXVIII

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!  
 Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?  
 Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil dyed?  
 Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest  
 After so many hours of toil and quest,

A famished pilgrim, — saved by miracle.  
 Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest  
 Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well  
 To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel."

340

## XXXIX

"Hark! 'tis an elfin-storm from fairy land,  
 Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:  
 Arise — arise! the morning is at hand; —  
 The bloated wassaillers will never heed: —  
 Let us away, my love, with happy speed; .  
 There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see, —  
 Drowned all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:  
 Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,  
 For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

350

## XL

She hurried at his words, beset with fear,  
 For there were sleeping dragons all around,  
 At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears;  
 Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found,  
 In all the house was heard no human sound.  
 A chain-drooped lamp was flickering by each door;  
 The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,

Fluttered in the besieging wind's uproar;  
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.      360

## XLII

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall !  
Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide,  
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,  
With a huge empty flagon by his side :  
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,  
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns :  
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide :—  
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones ;  
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans ;

## XLII

And they are gone: aye, ages long ago . . . . .      370  
These lovers fled away into the storm.  
That night the Baron dreant of many a woe,  
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form  
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,  
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old  
Died palsy-twitted, with meagre face deform ;  
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,  
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

## NOTES — SHELLEY

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### To A SKYLARK

P. 1, l. 8. **Cloud of fire**: What is it that is like a cloud of fire? What would be the difference in meaning were the semi-colon transferred to the end of line 7?

l. 15. **unbodied joy**: Certain critics maintain that the adjective should be **embodied**, and that it was so intended by Shelley. Which adjective seems to agree best with the spirit of the poem?

### THE CLOUD

P. 8, l. 53. **And I laugh to see them whirl and flee.** Compare Wordsworth's *Night Piece* : —

“ And above his head he sees  
The clear Moon, and the glory of the heavens.  
There in a black-blue vault she sails along,  
Followed by multitudes of stars, that, small  
And sharp, and bright along the dark abyss  
Drive as she drives.”

## ODE TO THE WEST WIND

"In December (1819) the last act of *Prometheus Unbound* was brought to a close. Several weeks earlier, on a day when the tempestuous west wind was collecting the vapors which pour down the autumnal rains, Shelley conceived, and in great part wrote, in a wood that skirted the Arno, that ode in which there is a union of lyrical breath with lyrical intensity unsurpassed in English song—the *Ode to the West Wind* . . . Harmonizing under a common idea the forces of external nature and the passion of the writer's individual heart, the stanzas, with all the penetrating power of a lyric, have something almost of epic largeness and grandeur." — DOWDEN.

P. 11, l. 21. **Mænad**: a bacchante—a priestess or votary of Bacchus.

P. 12, l. 41. **grow gray with fear**: Shelley explains: "The vegetation at the bottom of the sea, of rivers and of lakes, sympathizes with that of the land in the change of seasons, and is consequently influenced by the winds which announce it."

## WITH A GUITAR, TO JANE

Mrs. Jane Williams, the wife of Edward Williams, who was drowned with Shelley, was a warm friend of the Shelleys. Mrs. Shelley speaks of her as,—

"A violet by a mossy stone  
Half hidden from the eye."

Shelley writes of them as "the most amiable of companions." The poem accompanied the gift of a guitar.

P. 14, l. 1. **Ariel to Miranda**: The complete beauty of the poem cannot be felt without acquaintance with *The Tempest*.

## THE SENSITIVE PLANT

During the Shelleys' sojourn at Pisa one of their most congenial friends was Mrs. Mason (Lady Mountcashell). She had been the favorite pupil of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mrs. Shelley's mother, thirty years before. She is described by Medwin as "a superior and accomplished woman, a great resource to Shelley, who read with her Greek." Medwin further states Mrs. Mason was the source of the inspiration of the *Sensitive Plant*, and that "the scene of it was laid in the garden, as unpoetical a place as could well be imagined."

Miss Clairmont's account is suggestive of the poem : "Mrs. Mason was very tall, of a lofty and calm presence. Her features were regular and delicate ; her large blue eyes singularly well set ; her complexion of a clear pale, but yet full of life, and giving an idea of health. Her countenance beamed mildly with the expression of a refined, cultivated, and highly cheerful mind. She was ever all hopefulness, and serenity, and benevolence ; her features were ever irradiated by these sentiments, and at the same time by sentiments of purity and unconscious sweetness and beauty."

P. 23, l. 54. **fabulous asphodel** : In Greek mythology the asphodel covers the fields of Hades.

l. 57. **to roof the glow-worm** : Can you find a variation of this in *To a Skylark* ?

P. 29, l. 177. **Baiæ**, a seaport near the central western coast of Italy, famous as a pleasure resort during the first centuries of this era. The ruins of many castles yet mark its former magnificence.

## To WORDSWORTH

P. 36, l. 3. Childhood and youth : —

“ . . . That time is past,  
And all its aching joys are now no more.”

—*Tintern Abbey.*

But Wordsworth finds “abundant recompense.”

l. 7. Thou wert as a lone star : a reference to Wordsworth’s sympathy with the principles of the French Revolution ; of its early stages he writes thus in *The Prelude* : —

“ Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
But to be young was very heaven.”

and again : —

“ But Europe at that time was thrilled with joy,  
France standing on the top of golden hours,  
And human nature seeming born again.”

l. 13. Deserting these : The extremes to which the revolutionists went did not meet with Wordsworth’s approval ; France seemed to him, —

“ Impatient to put out the holy light  
Of Liberty that yet remained on earth ! ”

Compare Browning’s *Lost Leader*.

## To COLERIDGE

“ The poem beginning, ‘ Oh, there are spirits of the air,’ was addressed in idea to Coleridge, whom he never knew ; and at whose character he could only guess imperfectly through his writings, and accounts he heard from some who knew him well.

He regarded his change of opinions as rather an act of will than conviction, and believed that in his inner heart he would be haunted by what Shelley considered the better and holier aspirations of his youth.” — Note by MRS. SHELLEY.

I have often questioned whether the poem has reference (as Mrs. Shelley observes) to Coleridge, or whether it was not rather addressed in a despondent mood by Shelley to his own spirit. — DOWDEN.

P. 37, l. 1. **spirits of the air**: The first stanza suggests *The Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*; according to Trelawny, the former was recited in and out of season by Shelley.

l. 7. **With mountain winds**: While Coleridge’s poetry does not mark a “return to nature” so strongly and directly as Wordsworth’s, he was perhaps the real leader in the revolt from eighteenth century standards. But see his *Ode to Tranquillity* and *A Sunset*.

P. 38, l. 27. **The glory of the moon is dead**: The poetry that entitles Coleridge to a place in the first class of English poets was all written in a year (1797–1798). His visit to Germany changed him from poet to philosopher.

l. 30. **a foul fiend**: Coleridge resorted to opium shortly after his return from Germany. He never freed himself entirely from its effects and perhaps its use.

#### MONT BLANC

“The poem, *Mont Blanc*, was composed under the immediate impression of the deep and powerful feelings excited by the objects which it attempts to describe; and as an undisciplined overflowing of the soul rests its claim to approbation on an

attempt to imitate the untamable wildness and inaccessible solemnity from which these feelings sprang.” — SHELLEY.

P. 41, l. 60. **Far far above**: Study carefully lines 1–16, and decide how far the “untamable wildness and inaccessible solemnity” of the scene have been imitated. What train of thought is suggested by the “hunter’s bone” and “the wolf”?

P. 42, l. 80. **great Mountain**: The same idea with variations is expressed by Lowell :—

“With our faint heart the mountain strives.”

— *Vision of Sir Launfal*.

P. 43, l. 96. **Power dwells apart**: “Yet, after all, I cannot but be conscious, in much of what I write, of an absence of that tranquillity which is the attribute and accompaniment of power.” — SHELLEY to Godwin.

P. 44, l. 128. **solemn power**: Select the phrases and epithets in stanza v. that give the lines such relentless force. What rhetorical reason is there for the first six words in the stanza?

#### HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY

P. 45, l. 1. **unseen Power**: “The reader will observe how much this poem has in common with Wordsworth’s great ode, *Intimations of Immortality*.” — DOWDEN.

#### ARETHUSA

The poem embodies the substance of a Greek myth. Arethusa was a woodland nymph beloved by the river-god, Alpheus. He pursues her, and Diana, to protect the nymph, changes her to a fountain. When he attempts to mingle his stream with the waters of the fountain, Diana thwarts him again. The

ground is cleft, Arethusa plunges into the opening, passes through the earth, and comes out in Sicily.

P. 55, l. 1. **Arethusa arose**: In Shelley's poem, Arethusa is represented as a mountain brook when Alpheus first sees her.

#### LINES WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGANEAN HILLS

P. 68, l. 116. **Ocean's child, and then his queen**: Venice had reached her zenith in the fifteenth century. This verse is an allusion to the unique custom of "Wedding the Adriatic," a ceremony originated by the Doge in 1177.

l. 123. **slave of slaves**: Austria.

P. 70, l. 152. **Celtic Anarch's hold**: Shelley is obscure, and perhaps inaccurate. He is thinking, perhaps, of Napoleon (though Napoleon was not a Celt), who ceded the Venetian dominions to Austria (1797), forced it to relinquish this territory at the battle of Austerlitz (1805), annexed it to the kingdom of Italy, making himself the head of this kingdom, further humiliated Austria at the battle of Wagram (1809), and rose to the height of his power in 1811 "with Russia and Denmark his allies, and Austria and Prussia completely subject to his will." Venetia and Lombardy were restored by the Congress of Vienna (September, 1814, and June, 1815) to Austria, who practically ruled Italy.

l. 158. **memories of old time**: Venice is first in importance among the Italian city-republics.

l. 174. **tempest-cleaving Swan**: Byron. Is the epithet appropriate?

P. 71, l. 177. **evil dreams**: an allusion, perhaps, to Byron's poem, *The Dream*.

P. 72, l. 204. **Mighty spirit**: Shelley writes: "It (one of Byron's poems) sets him not only above, but far above, all the poets of the day, every word has the stamp of immortality. I despair of rivalling Lord Byron, as well I may, and there is no other with whom it is worth contending."

### OZYMANDIAS

P. 79, l. 1. **antique land**: Diodorus describes the statue. It was thought to be, he says, the largest in Egypt, the foot being seven cubits long. It was thus inscribed: "I am Ozymandias, king of kings; if any one wishes to know what I am and where I lie, let him surpass me in some of my exploits."

l. 14. **far away**. Compare with stanza iii. of *Mont Blanc*.

### A SUMMER EVENING CHURCHYARD

"The summer evening that suggested to him the poem written in the churchyard of Lechlade occurred during his voyage up the Thames in 1815. . . . A fortnight of a bright, warm July was spent in tracing the Thames to its source. He never spent a season more tranquilly." — Note by MRS. SHELLEY.

P. 82, l. 4. **In duskier braids**: —

"Thy dewy fingers draw  
The gradual dusky veil."

— COLLINS'S *Ode to Evening*.

In atmosphere the two poems are similar. Compare them.

### ADONAI'S

Shelley is indebted to the idyls of the Greek poets, Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus, for many of the ideas and much of the

phraseology in his elegy on Keats. Baldwin in his *The Book of Elegies* remarks that “they [the idyls] have been imitated by Spenser, improved upon by Milton, parodied by Pope and Gay, copied after by Shelley, and loved and admired by all poets.”

P. 92, l. 1. **Adonais**: a name coined by Shelley; doubtless suggested, however, by the myth of Adonis. Why? Compare the names Adonais and Lycidas in point of fitness.

P. 93, l. 10. **mighty Mother**: Urania, the muse of astronomy. Literally, “the heavenly one.” Shelley seems to accept the latter and to identify Urania with the highest spirit of lyrical poetry.

P. 94, l. 30. **Sire of an immortal strain**: Milton. Who are the other two “sons of light”?

P. 95, l. 48. **sad maiden**: Isabella.—KEATS.

P. 96, l. 73. **quick Dreams**: the poet’s thoughts.

P. 100, l. 145. **lorn nightingale**: an allusion to Keats’s *Ode to a Nightingale*.

l. 151. **Curse of Cain**: Shelley, in the preface to *Adonais*, exclaims, “Miserable man! You, one of the meanest, have wantonly defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers, but used none.”

P. 101, l. 177. **Shall that alone which knows**: Explain the figure. What is the “intense atom”?

P. 105, l. 238. **unpastured dragon**: meaning?

l. 240. **Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear?** Explain.

l. 250. **The Pythian of the age**: Byron. Why Pythian?

P. 106, l. 268. **In sorrow**: Byron was not so generous; he speaks thus of Keats:—

“John Keats—who was killed off by one critique,”  
and again:—

“Who killed John Keats?  
‘I,’ says the *Quarterly*,  
So savage and Tartarly;  
‘Twas one of my feats.””

l. 269. **sweetest lyrist**: Thomas Moore. “Whether Moore ever showed the faintest interest in or grief for Keats, I know not.”—W. M. ROSSETTI.

P. 107, l. 271. **Midst others of less note came one frail form**. This verse with the thirty-five following refers to Shelley himself.

P. 108, l. 297. **A herd-abandoned deer**: Compare *Hamlet*, III., 2:—

“Why, let the stricken deer go weep,  
The hart ungalled play;  
For some must watch, while some must sleep—  
So runs the world away.”

also *Merchant of Venice*:—

“I am a tainted wether of the flock,  
Meetest for death.”

P. 109, l. 307. **softer voice**: “Leigh Hunt was Keats’s earliest and chief poetical friend and adviser.”—HALES.

He mentioned Shelley and Keats in the *Examiner* of December, 1816, as “young poets” who “promised to bring a considerable addition of strength to the new school of English

poetry.'’ Keats's manuscripts (he had yet published nothing) in particular, “fairly surprised” him “with the truth of their ambition and ardent grappling with nature.” Hunt was directly instrumental in bringing Shelley and Keats together, and in making them personally acquainted.

P. 110, l. 340. **A portion of the Eternal**: Pantheism, the doctrine that the universe, taken as a whole, is God. This conception, variously modified, is popular in poetry. Note other instances in this poem. Tennyson objects to the theory: *In Memoriam*, xvii.

P. 111, l. 357. **He is secure**: etymology of “secure.”

P. 113, l. 393. **mortal lair**: Is there any special significance here in the term “lair”? Etymology?

l. 399. **Chatterton**: Thomas Chatterton was born in 1752 and died in 1770. Read an interesting account of him in *Eighteenth Century Literature*, Gosse. Keats addresses Chatterton thus:—

“Thou art among the stars  
Of highest heaven: to the rolling spheres  
Thou sweetly singest: nought thy hymning mars,  
Above the ingrate world and human fears.”

l. 401. **Sidney**: Sir Philip Sidney was born in 1554 and died in 1586. Consult *Elizabethan Literature*, Saintsbury.

l. 404. **Lucan**: Marcus Annaeus Lucanus was born in 39 A.D. and condemned to death by Nero in 65.

P. 114, l. 413. **amid an Heaven of Song**: Compare *Merchant\* of Venice*, V., i, 60.

“There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st  
But in his motion like an angel sings,

Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;  
Such harmony is in immortal souls;  
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it."

I. 416. **Fond wretch**: etymology of "fond"?

P. 116, l. 444. **one keen pyramid**: the tomb of Caius Cestius. In a letter to Thomas Love Peacock, Shelley writes thus of the cemetery: "The English burying-place is a green slope near the walls [of Rome] under the pyramidal tomb of Cestius, and is, I think, the most beautiful and solemn cemetery I ever beheld. To see the sun shining on its bright grass, fresh when we visited it with the autumnal dews, and hear the whispering of the wind among the leaves of the trees which have overgrown the tomb of Cestius, and the soil which is stirring in the sun-warm earth, and to mark the tombs, mostly of women and young people who were buried there, one might, if one were to die, desire the sleep they seem to sleep. Such is the human mind, and so it peoples with its wishes vacancy and oblivion."

## NOTES — KEATS

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### ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

P. 120, l. 16. **Hippocrene**: A spring, sacred to the Muses, on Mount Helicon in Bœotia.

### ODE TO PSYCHE

“The following poem, the last I have written, is the first and only one with which I have taken even moderate pains. I have, for the most part, dashed off my lines in a hurry ; this one I have done leisurely ; I think it reads the more richly for it, and it will, I hope, encourage me to write other things in even a more peaceful and healthy spirit.” — KEATS, to his brother George.

P. 126, l. 9. **two fair creatures**: Read the myth of Cupid and Psyche.

P. 127, l. 30. **delicious moan**: Compare *The Eve of St. Agnes*, vii., 2.

### TO AUTUMN

“I never liked stubble-fields so much as now — aye, better than the chilly green of spring. Somehow a stubble-plain looks

warm, in the same way that some pictures look warm. This struck me so much in my Sunday's walk that I composed upon it.” — KEATS to Reynolds.

P. 129, l. 14. **Thee sitting:** Read Gray's ode *On the Spring*, then Collins's *Passions*. Compare the two poems with Keats's in the use of personification.

#### ODE ON MELANCHOLY

P. 131, l. 26. **sovran shrine:** —

“The very source and fount of Day  
Is dashed with wandering isles of night.”

— *In Memoriam*, xxiv.

#### FANCY

P. 132, l. 21. **heavy shoon:** —

“And the dull swain  
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon.”

MILTON's *Comus*, 634–635.

P. 133, l. 46. **sticks and straw:** Note the onomatopœia; compare: —

“The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed.”

— GRAY's *Elegy*.

P. 135, l. 81. **Ceres' daughter:** Compare Milton's description:

“Proserpin gathering flowers,  
Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis  
Was gathered — which cost Ceres all that pain  
To seek her through the world.”

— *Paradise Lost*, IV., 269–272.

## ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

Charles Cowden Clarke and Keats had read Chapman far into the night. Early the next morning the sonnet was handed to Clarke. It was written in 1816 and is considered the best of Keats's early work.

P. 140, l. 8. **Chapman**: 1557–1634. He was, therefore, a contemporary of Shakespeare's. He wrote poetry and dramas, but is best known by his translation of Homer.

l. 11. **Cortez**: It should be Balboa, but the beauty of the poem is not marred by the error.

## SONNET TO HOMER

P. 143, l. 1. **giant ignorance**: an allusion to Keats's ignorance of the Greek language.

l. 11. **a budding morrow**: “It will be of interest to many lovers both of Keats and Rossetti [D. G.] to learn that the latter poet, whom we have but lately lost, considered this sonnet to contain Keats's finest single line of poetry—

‘There is a budding morrow in midnight,’

a line which Rossetti told me he thought one of the finest ‘in all poetry.’”—**FORMAN**.

Compare the verse with stanza iii. *Ode on Melancholy*.

## I STOOD TIP-TOE UPON A LITTLE HILL

“Mr. Keats is seen to his best advantage [in this poem], and displays all that fertile power of association and imagery which

constitutes the abstract poetical faculty as distinguished from every other.” — LEIGH HUNT.

P. 146, l. 18. *its brim*: Note the point of view.

P. 147, l. 22. *jaunty*: meaning?

l. 29. *bees about them*: cf. *Ode to a Nightingale*, stanza v.; also *To Autumn*, stanza i.

l. 38. *frequent chequer* = frequent checker; shadows alternating with patches of sunshine.

P. 149, l. 73. *wavy bodies*: —

“A shoal  
Of devious minnows wheel from where a pike  
Lurked balanced 'neath the lily pad, and whirl  
A rool of silver bellies to the day.”

— LOWELL.

*Under the Willows* is throughout strikingly suggestive of Keats’s poem.

\* P. 150, l. 92. *yellow flutterings*: Explain.

P. 151, l. 129. *staid*: regular, grave, calm.

P. 152, l. 162. *Narcissus*: Because of his insensibility to love he was made to worship his own image in the water. He was finally changed to the flower which bears his name. Echo, whose love for him was not returned, died of grief.

### ISABELLA; OR, THE POT OF BASIL.

The story is told by Boccaccio, *Decamerone*, Giorn. IV., Nov. 5.

\* P. 166, l. 209. *murdered man*: “The following masterly anticipation of his end, conveyed in a single word, has been justly admired.” — LEIGH HUNT.

P. 169, l. 262. **Hinnom's vale**: the valley of Hinnom where Moloch was worshipped. Compare Milton's description in *Paradise Lost*, I., 392–405, also Moloch's speech, II., 51–105.

P. 175, l. 393. **Persèan sword**: the sword with which Perseus slew Medusa, one of the three gorgons.

P. 178, l. 442. **Melpomene**: the muse of tragedy.

l. 451. **Baalites of pelf**: those who worship money as the pagans worship Baal.

P. 180, l. 493. **the Pilgrim**: This does not refer to Lorenzo.

#### THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

“St. Agnes was a Roman virgin, who suffered martyrdom in the reign of Diocletian. Her parents, a few days after her decease, are said to have had a vision of her, surrounded by angels, and attended by a white lamb which afterward became sacred to her. In the Catholic Church, formerly, the nuns used to bring a couple of lambs to her altar during Mass. The superstition is that by taking certain measures of divination, damsels may get a sight of their future husbands in a dream. The ordinary process seems to have been by fasting.”

— LEIGH HUNT.

St. Agnes's Day is January 21; St. Agnes's Eve, January 20.

P. 183, l. 31. **snarling trumpets**: Does the adjective denote a quality of the sound, or is it, from Porphyro's point of view, descriptive of the situation?

P. 188, l. 120. **witch's sieve**: Compare *Macbeth*, I., iii., 8.

P. 190, l. 171. **Merlin paid his Demon**: “The monstrous debt was his monstrous existence which he owed to a demon and

repaid when he died or disappeared through the working of one of his own spells by Viviane.” — FORMAN.

Compare Tennyson’s Vivian in *Idylls of the King*.

P. 193, l. 218. **gules**: “How proper, as well as pretty, the heraldic term *gules*, considering the occasion. *Red* would not have been a fiftieth part as good.” — LEIGH HUNT.

P. 194, l. 241. **where swart Paynims pray**: Paynim : pagan. Therefore a missal would be treasured more highly because of dangerous surroundings.

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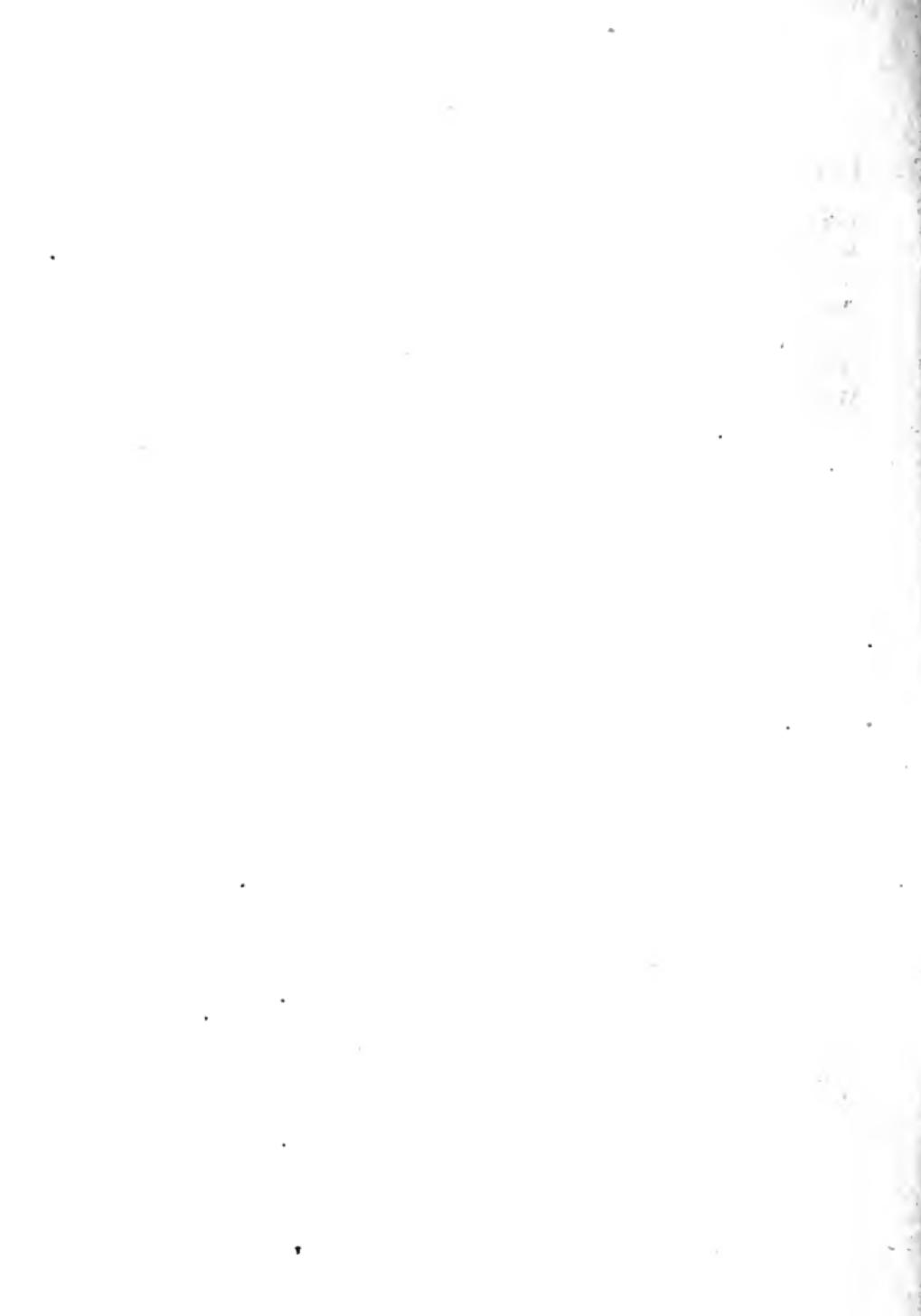
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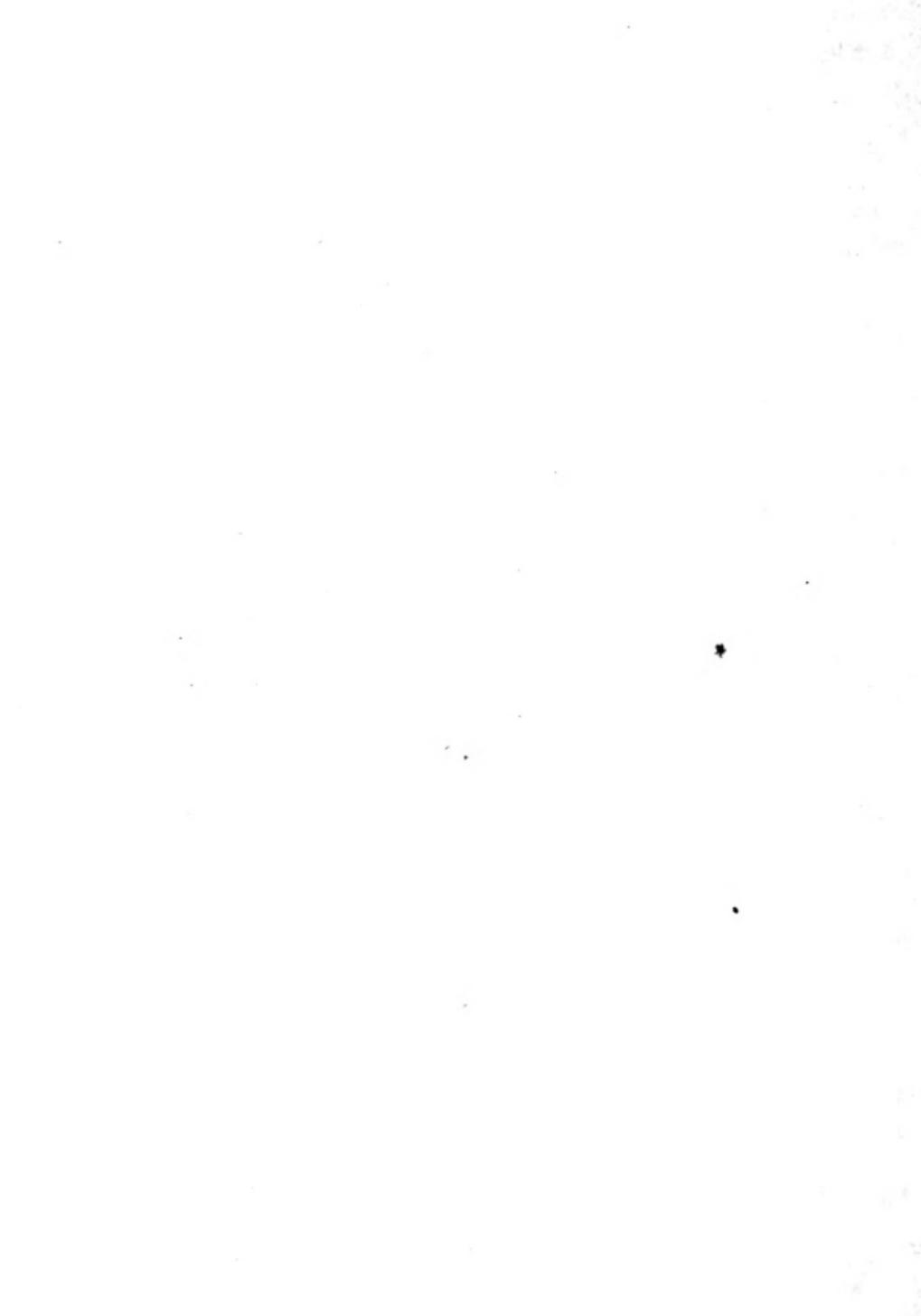
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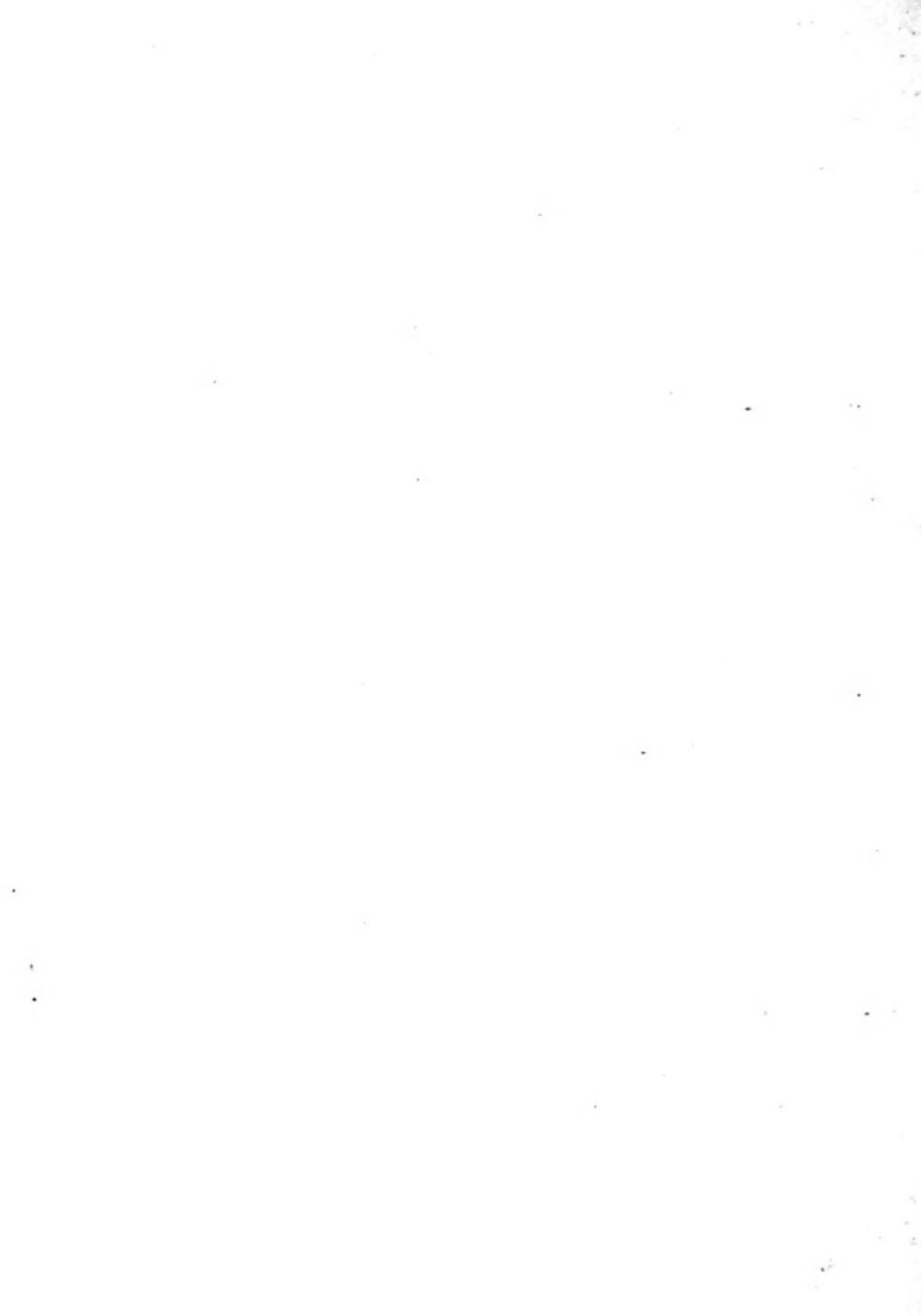
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